

Four more sites of India added to Ramsar list of Wetlands

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In news- Recently, four new sites from Gujarat and Haryana (two each) got recognition from the Ramsar Secretariat as Ramsar sites.

Key updates-

- The sites added to the list are **Thol and Wadhvana from Gujarat and Sultanpur and Bhindawas from Haryana.**
- With this, the **number of Ramsar sites in India are 46** and the surface area covered by these sites is now 1,083,322 hectares.
- While Haryana got its first Ramsar sites, Gujarat got three more after Nalsarovar which was declared in 2012.
- With eight wetlands, **Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of sites that have received the tag.**

About new Wetlands of Haryana-

Bhindawas:

- Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary, the **largest wetland in Haryana is a human-made freshwater wetland.**
- It was established as a Bird Sanctuary by the Government of India on 3rd June, 2009.
- This is an important part of the ecological corridor along the route of **Sahibi River.**
- Rain water, **JawaharLal Nehru Lift Irrigation Project** Feeder canal and its escape channel are the main source of water in the bird sanctuary.
- Over 250 bird species use the sanctuary throughout the year as a resting and roosting site.

- The site supports more than ten globally threatened species including the endangered Egyptian Vulture, Steppe Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, and Black-bellied Tern.

Sultanpur:

- Sultanpur National Park from Haryana supports more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds at critical stages of their life cycles.
- Sultanpur wetland is spread across 1.21 sq km.
- More than ten of these are globally threatened, including the critically endangered sociable lapwing, and the endangered Egyptian Vulture, Saker Falcon, Pallas's Fish Eagle and Black-bellied Tern.

New Wetlands of Gujarat:

Thol Lake:

- It is an artificial lake near Thol village in Kadi in **Mehsana District in the Indian state of Gujarat.**
- Thol Lake Sanctuary **is made up of a reservoir that was created in 1912 as an irrigation tank when the Maharajas of Baroda (Gaekwads) ruled the region.**
- It is a **freshwater lake** surrounded by marshes.
- It was declared the **Thol Bird Sanctuary** in 1988.
- This Sanctuary from Gujarat lies on the Central Asian Flyway and more than 320 bird species can be found here.
- The wetland supports more than 30 threatened waterbird species, such as the critically endangered White-rumped Vulture and Sociable Lapwing , and the vulnerable Sarus Crane, Common Pochard and Lesser White-fronted Goose.

Wadhvana Wetland:

- Wadhvana is a **century old tank, constructed by erstwhile**

King Gaikwad in 1909-10.

- This tank has a catchment area of 860 sq km , deriving its water from **Orsang river.**
- The lake is an important wetland inviting migratory birds from far off places like Siberia and Europe.
- They include some threatened or near-threatened species such as the endangered Pallas's fish-Eagle, the vulnerable Common Pochard, and the near-threatened Dalmatian Pelican, Grey-headed Fish-eagle and Ferruginous Duck.

Ramsar convention-

- It is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- It is the **only global treaty that focuses specifically on wetlands.**
- It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.
- Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world's geographic regions, have acceded to the treaty to become "Contracting Parties".

The aim of the Ramsar list is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands, which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.