

India adds 10 more wetlands designated as Ramsar sites

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In news— India has recently added 10 more wetlands designated as Ramsar sites to make a total 64 sites covering an area of 12,50,361 ha in the country.

Details of ten new wetlands-

The 10 new sites include: Six (6) sites in Tamil Nadu and One (1) each in Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha-

1. **Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary (Tamilnadu):**

- It is a significant **man-made wetland** which covers an area of 72.04 ha.
- It is situated in Nanguneri Taluk of Tirunelveli district of **Tamil Nadu**.
- This is the **largest reserve for breeding resident and migratory water birds in South India**.
- It is an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area forming part of the Central Asian Flyway**.
- It irrigates about 190 acres of paddy.

2. **Satkosia Gorge (Odisha):**

- Satkosia **spreads along the magnificent gorge over the mighty river Mahanadi in Odisha**.
- **Established in 1976 as a wildlife sanctuary**, Satkosia supports a rich ecosystem, representing a diverse population of floral and faunal species.
- It is the **meeting point of two biogeographic regions of India; the Deccan Peninsula and the Eastern Ghats**, contributing immense biodiversity.
- Satkosia Gorge wetland is a **mosaic of marshes and evergreen forests**. The forests of these catchments play a vital role in the prevention of the gorge siltation.
- It also helps in maintaining a specific desirable depth

of water crucial for the endangered gharial population and spawning of commercially important carps species.

3. Nanda Lake (Goa):

- It is considered to be critically significant for its ecosystem services and biodiversity values for the local communities and society at large.
- The majority of the area is **intermittent freshwater marshes that lie adjacent to one of the major rivulets of the Zuari River**. This enables the locals to **store the water during the off-monsoon season**.
- The stored water is also **utilized to cultivate paddy downstream of the lake and supports fishing and recreation**.
- During the monsoons the sluice gate is opened and the water is released which changes the character of the lake into a **marshland**. During this time the marshland is also utilized to grow paddy.
- This lake is **habitat for notable faunal species include Threskiornis melanocephalus (Black-headed ibis), Alcedo atthis (Common kingfisher), Hirundo smithii (Wire-tailed swallow), Metopidius indicus (Bronze-winged jacana), Haliastur indus (Brahminy kite), Ardea intermedia (Intermediate egret), Vanellus indicus (Red-wattled lapwing), Microcarbo niger (Little cormorant) and Dendrocygna javanica (Lesser whistling duck)**.

4. Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve (Tamil Nadu):

- **It is located in the southeastern coastline of India**, and is a unique marine environment rich in biodiversity.
- This is the **first Marine Biosphere Reserve in South & South-East Asia**.
- GoMBR is one of the most biologically diverse regions in India.
- The Reserve is also **home to** several globally important

and highly threatened species like the **Dugong**, whale shark, sea horses, Balanoglossus, 7 green sea turtle, Hawksbill turtle, dolphins, sacred chanks etc.

5. Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary (Karnataka) :

- It is **located in Mandya district, of the state of Karnataka, India.**
- This is also the **first and the only Ramsar site in Karnataka.**
- The site has been **enlisted as one of the Important Bird Areas (IBA) in Karnataka and India by Bombay Natural History Society.**
- It is an ecologically important riverine wetland of India, rich in biodiversity.
- The site supports several threatened taxa which include critically endangered species of fishes etc.
- Besides, it also supports one species each of endangered, vulnerable, and endemic plant species, and about 98 **medicinal plant species.**
- This proposed site supports healthy populations of **mugger crocodiles (Crocodylus palustris), smooth-coated otter (Lutrogale perspicillata)** and the river waters harbour the endangered hump-backed masheer (Tor remadevii).

6. Vembannur Wetland Complex (Tamil Nadu):

- Vembannur wetland in Tamil Nadu is a **human-made inland tank.**
- This wetland **forms the southernmost tip of peninsular India.**
- It also forms **part of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)** and hence part of BirdLife International Data Zone.
- About 250 species of birds have been recorded in the district. **The site hosts around 12% of the total non-breeding population of garganey.** Around 5 rare, endemic

& threatened flora are present within the Site.

- The tank is **believed to have been constructed in the regime of Pandyan king Veerananarayana.**
- The tank and the Therrakal canal were designed to take **water from River Pazhayar for irrigation purposes.**
- The River Pazhayar and Vembannur wetland collects the entire drainage of the valley and irrigates a substantial part of Nanchilwadu.

7. Vellode Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu):

- It is located in the Vadamugam Vellode Village of the Perundurai Taluk, in the Erode District, Tamil Nadu.
- It is **provincially known as Periyakulam Yeri and is one of the 141 Prioritized wetlands in Tamil Nadu.**
- The wetlands have been evaluated and prioritized considering factors like the ecology of the wetland, earlier bird counts, records of breeding, and roosting colonies.
- Spread over an area of 77.185 ha, this site forms **part of the Central Asian Flyway.**

8. Sirpur Wetland (Madhya Pradesh):

- Sirpur wetland is a significant **historical wetland situated in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.**
- It is not only important for its **aesthetic value** but it provides immense **ecological services** such as being an important **source of water and helping groundwater recharge** in the downstream areas.
- It is also **culturally important to the local communities of the city.** The wetland supports a wide variety of flora and fauna.
- It is an important **nesting place for terrestrial and aquatic migratory & residential birds.**
- Presently, the wetland is being developed as a bird sanctuary and ecological learning center.

9. Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu):

- Vedanthangal wetland is **one of the oldest bird-protected areas located in Maduranthagam Taluk of Chengalpattu District of Tamil Nadu.**
- This **freshwater wetland is a people-protected water bird area**, the history of which goes back to centuries where local people have been protecting this heronry and in return, have been benefited by the manure-rich water from the lake that **increases the agriculture yield multifold–Liquid Guano Effect.**
- This site is also recognized internationally, **as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA).**
- It **belongs to the Coromandel Coast biotic province.**

10. **Udayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu):**

- It is located in the Tiruthuraipoondi Taluk of Tiruvarur district of Tamil Nadu.
- The site is an **important staging and breeding ground for several species of waterbirds.**
- The notable species observed at the site are oriental darter, glossy ibis, grey Heron & Eurasian spoonbill.
- It is one of the important breeding sites for the darter & Eurasian spoonbill.
- Udayamarthandapuram **stores floodwaters during monsoon overflows** and maintains surface water flow during drier periods.

Further reading:
<https://journalsofindia.com/five-more-indian-wetlands-got-international-tag-of-ramsar-sites/>