

Pong Dam wildlife Sanctuary

January 9, 2021

In news

Many migratory birds found dead in Pong Dam wildlife sanctuary of Himachal Pradesh

What is the cause?

Avian influenza (H5N1) has led to the death of around 2,736 migratory birds in Himachal Pradesh, so far, in the sanctuary area in district Kangra of the State.

What is Bird flu(H5N1)?

- H5N1 is a type of influenza virus that causes a highly infectious, **severe respiratory disease in birds called avian influenza (or “bird flu”)**.
- Human cases of H5N1 avian influenza occur occasionally, but it is difficult to transmit the infection from person to person. When people do become infected, the mortality rate is about 60%.
- Animal influenza viruses are distinct from human seasonal influenza viruses and do not easily transmit between humans.
- However, zoonotic influenza viruses – animal influenza viruses that may occasionally infect humans through direct or indirect contact – can cause disease in humans ranging from a mild illness to death.
- **Host:** Birds are the natural hosts for avian influenza viruses.

About the Pong Dam wildlife sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh

- **Establishment:** It was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1983, and is now also a Ramsar site.
- Pong Dam Sanctuary is also a national wetland. In 1975, it was created as a result of a dam built across the

Beas River

- It plays host to around 220 species of birds belonging to 54 families. Migratory birds from all over Hindukush Himalayas and also as far as Siberia come here during winter.
- **Forest:** The sanctuary area is covered with tropical and subtropical forests, which shelters a great number of Indian Wildlife animals.
- The lake is fed by Beas River and its numerous perennial tributaries such as Gaj, Neogal, Binwa, Uhl, Bangana, and Baner.
- The lake harbours around 22 species of fish, including rare fish like sal and gad.

A brief note on Pong Dam

- A reservoir has been constructed on the river Beas in the wet land of Shivalik hills of Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, which has been named as Maharana Pratap Sagar.
- It is also known as Pong reservoir or Pong Dam. This dam was built in 1975 named in honor of Maharana Pratap
- The reservoir stretches to an area of 24,529 hectares (60,610 acres), and part of the lakes is 15,662 hectares (38,700 acres).
- Pong reservoir is the most important fish reservoir in the foothills of the Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh.