

- Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance and ensure their effective management;
- Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.

The Convention has been ratified by 170 countries, who have designated 2,339 wetlands as Ramsar Sites. India ratified the Convention on February 1, 1982 and has so far designated 26 wetlands as Ramsar Sites. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal ministry for the Convention in India.

Efforts of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

For conservation and management of identified wetlands in the country, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is currently implementing the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) on cost sharing basis between Central Government and respective State Governments. The programme aims to promote mainstreaming of wetlands in developmental programming within States by supporting formulation and implementation of integrated management plans, capacity development and research. Assistance is provided for components such as survey and assessment; catchment area treatment; desilting and dredging of critically silted-up areas; interception, diversion and treatment of sewage; storm water management; habitat restoration; management of invasive species; communication and outreach, and monitoring and evaluation. Under the scheme, financial assistance has been provided for conservation and management of 146 wetlands in 24 States and 1 UT.

The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 notified superseding the wetland rules, 2010 under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 provides the regulatory framework for wetland conservation in the country.

Nalsaravar, Gujarat

Nalsaravar is the largest wetland bird sanctuary of Gujarat harbouring around 250 species of birds of which 158 are water-birds. Three species of pelicans, including the vulnerable Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* are found here. During summers, the dry wetland bed is inhabited by a number of mammals including Asiatic Wild Ass *Equus hemionus*.



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World Wetlands Day

February 2, 2019

Bhitarkanika, Odisha



Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Government of India

World Wetlands Day

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2nd February. This day marks the date of adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of Caspian Sea. The day is an opportune event for promoting, creating awareness and ensuring positive actions for conservation of wetlands.

Wetlands are areas saturated with water, permanently or seasonally, giving it character of a distinct ecosystem. Wetlands can be inland (such as swamps, marshes and lakes), coastal and near shore marine (such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds and estuaries) and human-made (such as reservoirs, tanks and fish ponds).

As per the National Wetland Atlas prepared by Space Application Centre, India has 0.75 million wetlands

covering an area of 15.26 million ha (roughly equivalent to 4.6% of country's land area). Wetlands are vital for human survival. They are among the world's most productive ecosystems and are cradles of biological diversity that provide water and productivity upon which countless species of plants and animals depend for survival. Wetlands are a source of diverse range of ecosystem services which include freshwater supply, food and building materials, flood control, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, recreation and climate change mitigation.

The 2019 theme 'Wetlands and Climate Change' marks the role healthy wetlands play in making cities and towns liveable, through groundwater recharge, buffering floods, filtering wastewater, enhancing landscape aesthetics, providing income generation opportunities and ultimately supporting well-being.

Bhitarkanika, Odisha

Bhitarkanika, of the most diverse mangrove swamps, is famed for its Saltwater crocodile *Crocodylus porosus*. It is bordered by Gahirmatha Beach, which is the largest known nesting site of the Olive Ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* in the world. The marshes and dense mangroves buffer communities living in and around from the impact of tropical storms and cyclones.



Bhoj, Madhya Pradesh

A complex of two lakes (Upper and Lower Lakes), the Bhoj wetland is a source of water to Bhopal City and is a key recreational amenity. Belt of deciduous forest along the south-eastern boundary of the wetland comprises Van Vihar National Park. In peak seasons, over 35,000 waterbirds can be seen here.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to:

- Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands;



We are not powerless against climate change



World Wetlands Day
2 February 2019



Wetlands and climate change

www.WorldWetlandsDay.org