**ENVIRONMENT**

**RAMSAR CONVENTION**

**WHY IN NEWS**?

Down To Earth: Bihar’s only Ramsar site being neglected.

**BACKGROUND**

* [The Ramsar Convention](https://www.ramsar.org/) is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

**FOUNDING**

* It was signed in 1971 Ramsar, Iran and launched in 1975
* HQ: Gland, Switzerland(IUCN)
* MEMBERSHIP: 172 Contracting Parties.

Also closely works with other international organization partners like WWF, IUCN etc.

* February 2 is World Wetlands Day, marking the convention's adoption on 2 February 1971.

**WORKING**

* The Convention uses a broad definition of wetlands. It includes all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt pans.
* The Contracting Parties commit to:
* work towards the wise use of all their wetlands;
* designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the “Ramsar List”) and ensure their effective management;
* cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.

**RAMSAR LIST**

* + The Ramsar Convention encourages the designation of sites containing representative, rare or unique wetlands, or wetlands that are important for conserving biological diversity.
  + Once designated, these sites are added to the Convention's List of Wetlands of International Importance and become known as Ramsar sites.
  + In designating a wetland as a Ramsar site, countries agree to establish and oversee a management framework aimed at conserving the wetland and ensuring its wise use. Wise use under the Convention is broadly defined as maintaining the ecological character of a wetland.
  + As of November 2023, there are 2,500 Ramsar sites around the world
  + Country with most number of Ramsar sites: UK(175)
  + Country with most area under Ramsar list: Bolivia.

**INDIA’S POSITION**

* + India has the highest number of Wetlands in Asia(75)
  + Largest Ramsar Wetland in India: Sundarban 4230 Sq Km
  + Smallest Ramsar Wetland in India: Renuka and Vembannur 0.2 Sq Km
* The total wetland area estimated is **15.98 million hectare (mha)** including rivers and excluding paddy field areas that is around **4.86%** of the geographic area of the country.
* India has designated 75 Wetlands of International Importance as Ramsar sites covering an area of 1.33 million ha across the country.

Top States with Wetlands by Area

* Gujarat
* Maharashtra
* Andhra Pradesh
* West Bengal

**MONTREUX RECORD**

* + It is a list maintained as a part of Ramsar list
  + The **Montreux Record** is a register of wetland sites on the List of Ramsar wetlands of international importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.
  + As in August 2021, 48 sites are listed in the Montreux Record.
  + India’s sites under Montreux Record:
* **Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan)**and**Loktak Lake (Manipur).**
* **Chilika lake (Odisha)** was placed in the record but was**later removed** from it.