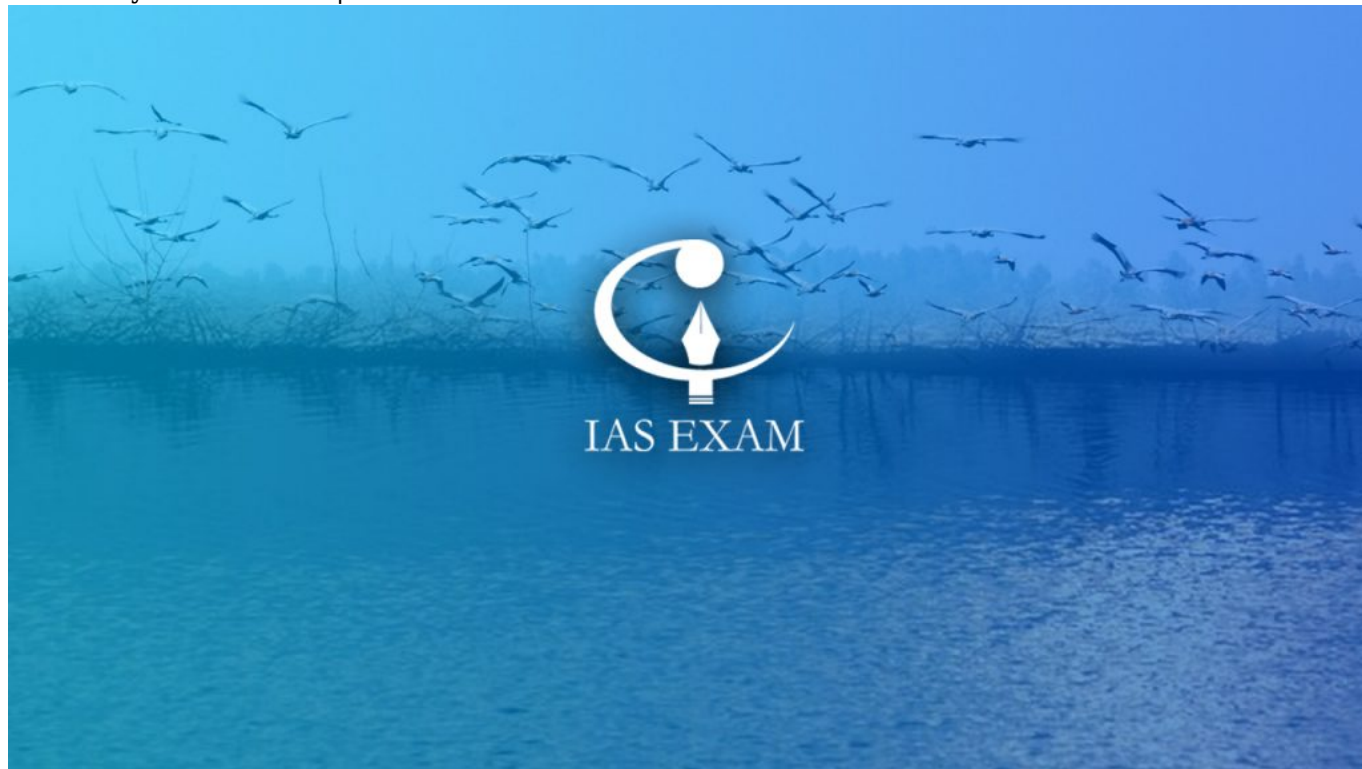


10 more wetlands in India declared as Ramsar sites

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India has added 10 more wetlands to sites protected by the Ramsar Convention, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar announced recently. With this, a total of 37 sites in the country have been recognised under the international treaty. Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines.

The 10 new ones are:

- Nandur Madhameshwar, a first for Maharashtra;
- Keshopur-Miani, Punjab
- Beas Conservation Reserve and Nangal, Punjab
- Nawabganj, Parvati Agra,
- Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and Sarsai Nawar in Uttar Pradesh.

The other Ramsar sites are in Rajasthan, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Tripura.

The minister said the conservation of wetlands would also go a long way in boosting the recently launched 'Nal se Jal' scheme, which aims to provide a piped water connection to every household by 2024. With the addition of the 10 sites, the total protected wetland area in the country covers a surface area of 1,067,939 hectares.

The Convention, signed in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, is one of the oldest inter-governmental accords for preserving the ecological character of wetlands. Also known as the Convention on Wetlands, it aims to develop a global network of wetlands for conservation of biological diversity and

for sustaining human life.

In the past six months, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has prepared a four-pronged strategy for the restoration of wetlands which includes preparing baseline data, wetland health cards, enlisting wetland mitras and preparing targeted integrated management plans.

About Ramsar Convention

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Wetlands provide a wide range of important resources and ecosystem benefits such as food, water, fibre, groundwater recharging, water purification, flood moderation, erosion control and climate regulation. They are also one of the major supplies of fresh water.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*