



Mains Practice Question

Q. Comment on the National Wetland Conservation Programme initiated by the Government of India and name a few of India's wetlands of international importance included in the Ramsar Sites. (Answer in 250 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach

- Begin by briefly introducing the Ramsar Convention and provide examples of few Ramsar sites in India.
- Discuss the National Wetland Conservation Programme (NWCP), its importance and objectives.
- Conclude with highlighting India's commitment towards wetland conservation.

Introduction

Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands. A wetland listed under the Convention is called wetlands of international importance. Important Ramsar sites in India include the following:

- Karikili bird sanctuary (Tamil Nadu): It is home to cormorants, grey heron and open-billed stork.
- Pichavaram mangrove (Tamil Nadu): It is an island of vast mangrove forest.
- Chandra Taal: It is one of the two high altitude Ramsar wetlands.

Body

The National Wetland Conservation Programme (NWCP) was initiated to protect wetlands considering the benefits provided by them such as freshwater supply, resource pool, biodiversity, flood control, groundwater recharge, and climate change mitigation. The NWCP seeks to conserve wetlands and prevent degradation while providing local communities access to the benefits provided by them.

Importance of NWCP

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) has identified 115 wetlands that require urgent conservation and management.
- It defines wetlands in the same way as prescribed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- While wetlands are administered by state governments, the central government is responsible for funds, technical assistance and overall coordination.

Objectives of NWCP

- Laying down policy guidelines for conservation and management of wetlands.
- Preparing and maintaining inventory of wetlands.
- Allocation of financial assistance to states.
- Monitoring the implementation of the program.
- Sponsoring multidisciplinary research by institutions.

Conclusion

The National Wetland Conservation Programme, coupled with the recognition of Ramsar Sites, reflects India's commitment to preserving the ecologically sensitive areas for current and future generations

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