



Encroachment at Karbatal Wetland

Why in News?

Recently, **The Eastern Zone Circuit Bench** of the [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) has set up a four member committee to look into allegations made in [encroachment](#) of [Karbatal wetland](#) at **Begusarai district in Bihar**.

Key Points

- The allegations of encroachment and degradation of the [Ramsar Site](#) were made by an environmental activist who approached the NGT.
- The site of Karbatal wetlands was designated as [Bird Sanctuary](#) by the Government of Bihar in **1989**.
 - It was **designated as a Ramsar site in 2020** and is recognized as **Asia's largest freshwater oxbow lake**.
- The wetland, comprising a cluster of 16-17 waterbodies and serving as a **catchment area for rainwater**, has faced encroachment over time, leading to allegations that the area has been permitted to diminish.
 - According to the 2019 post-monsoon report, approximately **82% of the site was marshland (with 25% of it being cultivated)**, 16% was open water, and the remainder consisted of plantations or borrow land.
- Environmental experts have raised concerns that **encroachment and the drying of the lake have severely impacted birds by depriving them of their habitat**.

Oxbow Lake

- An **oxbow lake is a curved lake formed alongside a winding river** as a result of erosion and sediment deposition over time.
- Oxbow lakes are typically **crescent-shaped** and are common features in **floodplains and low-lying areas near rivers**.

Ramsar Site

- **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands** is an **intergovernmental treaty** adopted in **1971** in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the [Caspian Sea](#).
- It **came into force for India on 1st February, 1982**. Those **wetlands which are of international importance** are declared as **Ramsar sites**.
- 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".
- The [Montreux Record](#) is a register of wetland sites on the List of 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.

