

## Five more Indian wetlands get Ramsar recognition of international importance

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Five more Indian sites have been recognised as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Three of these wetlands are in Tamil Nadu and one each in Mizoram and Madhya Pradesh, making a total of 54 Ramsar sites in the country.

The sites include the Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest & Pichavaram Mangrove in Tamil Nadu, Pala wetland in Mizoram, and Sakhya Sagar in Madhya Pradesh.

"The emphasis PM Narendra Modi Ji has put on environmental protection and conservation has led to a marked improvement in how India treats its wetlands," Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change said in a tweet, adding that India's total of Ramsar sites has now risen from 49 to 54.

The Ramsar recognition aims to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands that are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes, and benefits.

The recognition is part of the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. It is named after the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the Caspian Sea, where the treaty was signed on February 2, 1971.

The five newly recognised wetlands of international importance include:

**KARIKILI BIRD SANCTUARY:** Located in Kanchipuram district, nearly 86 kilometers away from Chennai, this bird sanctuary is spread over a five-kilometer-wide belt and is home to cormorants, egrets, grey heron, open-billed stork, darter, spoonbill, white Ibis, night herons, grebes, grey pelican among others.

**PALLIKARANAI MARSH RESERVE FOREST:** One of the last remaining natural wetlands of Chennai city, the marsh drains in an area of 250 square kilometers encompassing 65 wetlands. According to the Tamil Nadu State Wetland Authority, the Pallikaranai Marsh is one of the few natural coastal aquatic habitats that qualify as a wetland in India.

**PICHAVARAM MANGROVE:** One of the last mangrove forests in the country, Pichavaram is located near Chidambaram in the Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu. It has an island of a vast expanse of water covered with mangrove forests.

**SAKHYA SAGAR:** Created from the Manier river in 1918, Sakhya Sagar is located near Madhav National Park in the Shivpuri district of Madhya Pradesh.

**PALA WETLAND:** Palak Dil or Pala Tipo means swallowing lake in Mara language, and the wetland, located near Phura village in Saiha district of Mizoram, is home to a wide range of animals, birds, and reptiles. According to the government of Mizoram, Its geographical location falls under the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot and is therefore rich in animal and plant species. The lake is a major component of the Palak Wildlife Sanctuary and it supports the major biodiversity of the sanctuary.

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