

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1655
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.03.2025

Conservation and Restoration of Wetlands

1655. SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:
DR. K SUDHAKAR:
SMT. HIMADRI SINGH:
SHRI ALOK SHARMA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of specific initiatives taken by the Government to conserve and restore wetlands across the country;
- (b) whether any new policies or legal frameworks are introduced to strengthen wetland protection under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the plan proposed by the Government to raise awareness about wetland conservation among the general public, students and policymakers; and
- (d) the details of the wetlands lost in the State of Karnataka during the last two decades and the details of the steps taken for restoration of wetlands in the State?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (b) MoEF&CC is currently implementing the 'National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-systems (NPCA)' scheme for conservation and management of wetlands in the country on cost sharing basis between Central Government and respective State Governments. The scheme covers various activities such as interception, diversion and treatment of wastewater, shoreline protection, in-situ cleaning i.e., desilting & dewatering, storm water management, bioremediation, catchment area treatment, survey & demarcation, bio-fencing, fisheries development, weed control, biodiversity conservation, education and awareness creation, community participation, etc.

For more effective conservation and management of wetlands in the country, MoEF&CC in consultation with the stakeholders, have notified the Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017 superseding the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010. Vide these Rules, the State/Union Territory (UT) Wetland Authorities have been constituted (replacing the Central Wetlands Regulatory Authority in 2010 Rules) and powers & functions for notification of wetlands as also for implementation and monitoring of these Rules have been delegated to the State Governments and UT Administrations. The National Wetlands Committee has been constituted to advise the Central Government on conservation of wetlands, monitor implementation of the rules by the States/UTs etc.

India is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on wetlands and since 2014, India has added 63 wetlands as Ramsar Sites. As on date, there are 89 Ramsar Sites in the country, covering approximately 1.36 million hectares. To promote the unique conservation values of Ramsar Sites, MoEF&CC has launched the Amrit Dharohar Initiative in 2023 with its key components as Species and Habitat Conservation, Nature Tourism, Wetlands Livelihoods and Wetlands Carbon Assessment. Further, for the first time, two Indian cities, Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Udaipur in Rajasthan were accredited as Wetland Cities under the Ramsar Convention in 2025.

(c) World Wetlands Day (WWD) is celebrated every year across the Country on 2nd February to generate awareness amongst all sections of the society about values and functions of wetlands and utilization of their resources. In the run up to the WWD, various events are conducted by engaging the wetland mitras, local communities, students as well as Government officials. The activities are based on the theme of the WWD for that particular year and includes wetland cleaning drives, bird census and bird watching sessions, plantation drives, debates, quiz, painting, photography, film making, nukkad natak competitions, exhibitions, seminars, and awareness rallies.

A National Wetlands Portal <https://indianwetlands.in/> has been developed as a dynamic knowledge hub on wetlands for use of all wetlands managers and stakeholders. It is a One-stop digital destination for resources & data repository for wetlands. The portal provides a platform for the people of the country to learn more about wetlands and get involved in their conservation and management.

‘Mission Sahbhagita’ was launched in May, 2022 for people and stakeholders’ participation in the wetlands conservation and management, which is a milestone step towards participatory conservation and wise use of wetlands to enable a societal ownership approach with communities leading at the forefront. Under this Mission, ‘Save Wetlands Campaign’ was launched during the WWD 2023 for spreading mass awareness about conservation and management of wetlands in the country, with target-based outputs in collaboration with State/UT Wetlands Authorities. Under the campaign, till date, inter-alia, more than 2.1 million people were sensitized and 9,36,989 people have taken pledge as Wetland Mitra or registered as Wetland Mitras. Most of these people are students.

Further, in collaboration with Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), NCERT, MoEF&CC has developed a series of educational videos focusing on different level of school students on the importance of wetlands conservation and management. These videos are being circulated through the educational channels of NCERT and the Wetlands of India portal for nation-wide dissemination and sensitisation of school students.

(d) As per the information provided by the Government of Karnataka, there is no designated wetland lost during the last two decades in the State of Karnataka. The Government of Karnataka had notified the State Wetlands Authority and its amendment on 13.03.2018 and 11.07.2022 respectively. State Wetland Authority Online Portal was launched in 2024 for collecting the brief document data online through the custodians of the water bodies across the state. Ground truthing & boundary demarcation of wetlands carried out in compliance to the Hon’ble Supreme Court Order. Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has submitted about 80 brief documents for notifying under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017. Karnataka State Wetlands Authority is actively involved in Save Wetlands Campaign.

Further, under the NPCA scheme, MoEF&CC has provided financial assistance (central share) of Rs. 43.72 crores to the State Government of Karnataka for conservation and management of 20 wetlands.