Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Comment on the National Wetland Conservation Programme initiated by the Government of India and name a few India's wetlands of international importance included in the Ramsar Sites.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

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Answer Hint

Wetlands provide ecological, hydrological and livelihood services but face pollution, encroachment and hydrological alteration; conservation therefore requires integrated management, community participation and implementation of Ramsar commitments.

Model Answer

Introduction

Wetlands are ecosystems where water remains the primary factor controlling the environment and associated plant and animal life. They support biodiversity, groundwater recharge, flood moderation, carbon storage and livelihoods.

Body

National Wetland Conservation Programme

The Government initiated the **National Wetland Conservation Programme (NWCP)** to promote conservation and wise use of identified wetlands of ecological importance.

Its broad objectives included:

Ecological conservation: Protecting wetland biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

Pollution control: Reducing contamination from sewage, industrial discharge and agricultural runoff.

Hydrological management: Maintaining appropriate water regimes and preventing ecological degradation.

Biodiversity protection: Conserving habitats for migratory birds and aquatic species.

Community participation: Encouraging local involvement in sustainable wetland management.

The programme was subsequently integrated with the National Lake Conservation Plan under the broader **National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-systems (NPCA)**.

Ramsar Sites in India

Examples of wetlands recognised under the **Ramsar Convention** include:

Chilika Lake — Odisha
Keoladeo National Park — Rajasthan
Loktak Lake — Manipur
Wular Lake — Jammu and Kashmir
Sambhar Lake — Rajasthan
East Kolkata Wetlands — West Bengal
Nalsarovar — Gujarat

Challenges

Encroachment, pollution, invasive species, altered hydrology, excessive resource extraction and urbanisation threaten wetland ecosystems.

Conclusion

Wetland conservation requires a shift from isolated protection to **ecosystem-based management**, integrating hydrology, biodiversity, local livelihoods and community participation. Ramsar recognition can strengthen this conservation framework.

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