

Wetlands International South Asia

Annual Report

2025–2026

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Module No. 003, Ground Floor
NSIC Business Park
Okhla Industrial Estate
New Delhi-110020, India
Tel: +91 (11) 46038906
wi.southasia@wi-sa.org

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Cover Photo: A floodplain wetland of river Yamuna at Sarai Kale Khan, New Delhi, India / @Ravi Prakash

Back Cover Photo: Khader Chilla, Delhi / @Ravi Prakash

Design and layout

Sugandha Menda

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About us

Wetlands International South Asia is a non-government organisation committed to the conservation and restoration of wetlands in the South Asia region.

The organisation was established in 1996 in New Delhi as part of the Wetlands International network. Wetlands International is a global, independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands. With a global office in the Netherlands, Wetlands International presently works in over 100 countries through a network of 19 regional and national offices and expert networks. Wetlands International is one of the six International Organisation Partners of the Ramsar Convention. In 2005, Wetlands International South Asia was registered under the Societies Registration Act of the Government of India.

The organisation strives to achieve its mission of inspiring and mobilising society to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature using three interconnected strategies, namely providing science and evidence-based tools and knowledge, delivering on-ground outcomes through effective field demonstrations, and fostering collaborations and partnerships to support long-term conservation outcomes. The organisation focuses on creating an enabling environment for wetlands conservation through developing skills and capacities, training systems, collective mechanisms, and supporting effective institutions.

The work of Wetlands International South Asia spans the following impact focus areas:



Strengthening integrated management of wetlands



Rejuvenating wetlands for water security



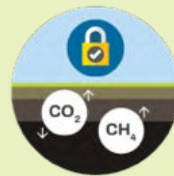
Nurturing wetland livelihoods



Wetlands as Nature-based Solution for disaster risk reduction



Conserving wetland biodiversity



Safeguarding wetland carbon

Our Governing Body



Dr Sidharth Kaul, President

Former Advisor (Wetlands),
Ministry of Environment,
Forest and Climate Change,
Government of India



Prof JK Garg, Vice-President

Formerly Director, Tribhuvan
College of Environment
and Development Sciences,
Nalanda University Centre,
Neemrana



Mr Pijush Sinha, Treasurer

Board Member, Avendus
Finance Private Limited

The Governing Body comprises the Office Bearers, seven members elected by the General Body and the Chief Executive Officer, Wetlands International, as the ex-officio member.



Prof CK Varshney

Professor Emeritus, Environmental Sciences,
Jawaharlal Nehru University and Distinguished Adjunct
Professor, AIT, Bangkok



Dr Sara Ahmed

Adjunct Professor, Indian Institutes of Science
Education and Research (IISER), Pune and Founder,
Living Waters Museum



Dr Lalitha Vijayan

Honorary Director, Salim Ali Foundation, Thrissur, Kerala



Prof MN Murty

Former Director, Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi



Prof KV Jayakumar

Visiting Professor & Outreach Advisor, IIT Dharwad
Formerly Professor of Civil Engineering, Dean (Planning &
Development) and Dean (International Relations and Alumni
Affairs), NIT Warangal, Telangana



Dr Manoj P Samuel

Principal Scientist, ICAR- Central
Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi, Kerala



Mr Coenraad Krijger

Chief Executive Officer, Wetlands International Global
office, The Netherlands (ex-officio)

Our Presence





Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary,
Telangana / @Umang Agnihotri

From The President

It gives me great pleasure in presenting the annual report 2025–26 of Wetlands International South Asia (WISA), which highlights various efforts made in strengthening wetland management issues needed to enhance our desire to at least decrease the further degradation of wetlands through our various initiatives taken up across the country and south asian region.

The report provides excerpts of work done for rejuvenating wetlands for water security, strengthening integrated management, conserving wetlands biodiversity, and safeguarding wetlands carbon. Continuing with the wetlands inventory of the Gangetic floodplain wetlands, we have initiated an inventory of wetlands in the River Yamuna floodplains with the support of NMCG. In the Himalayas, we have refined estimates of peat extent in the North-East region and advanced site management in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh.

I had the opportunity to represent the organisation at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention, held in July 2025 in Zimbabwe. A crucial outcome of the meeting was the adoption of the fifth strategic plan, which will guide global efforts for wetlands conservation for the coming decade. We also supported developing India's first resolution to the convention on Sustainable Lifestyles for wetland wise use, which was adopted by consensus. Considering similar issues that confront our wetlands in South Asia, we initiated a common platform to strengthen our partnership with different countries in this region. This was highly appreciated by all partner countries in the region, and it is progressing well to enable this platform to learn from each other's expertise to solve the degradation of wetlands in a collective manner.

During the year, we have taken several measures to improve the governance. The Rules and Regulations have been amended to incorporate changes in the provisions for accounting for vacancies created by resignation, death, disability, and other causes. The

Governing Body also periodically meets at field sites to have a direct interface with stakeholders. We held our last meeting at Loktak Lake, Manipur, and met the officials of the Loktak Development Authority and the Department of Forest, Government of Manipur, to be apprised of the ground situation and ways in which the role of the organisation can be made more effective. The skills and qualifications matrix for various positions in the Society is being used to identify suitable candidates for the Governing Body. An editorial board for managing the Society's newsletter, Sarovar, has also been established at the advice of the Governing Body, to address contemporary issues related to wetlands conservation in India.



We have constituted three working groups on wetland wise use, wetlands inventory, and small wetlands. These chosen areas are used profusely but are less understood. It was desired to deal with these areas in a more systematic manner so that these thematic areas are not only well understood but well executed too. These groups are led by eminent Governing Body members who are working with other members as well as external experts to develop specific recommendations that would have far-reaching consequences for wetlands conservation in the country. This will make our restoration plan more meaningful and easier to implement and execute.

I take this opportunity to thank the members of the General Body and the Governing Body for their guidance and whole-hearted support. The team at Wetlands International South Asia has been diligently implementing various programmes, and their commitment to the cause of wetland conservation ethos deserves all praise. I thank the whole staff of our organisation for their dedicated work and enthusiasm.

Dr Sidharth Kaul
President

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From The Director's Desk

2025–26 was a milestone year for wetlands conservation, globally as well as for India. Adoption of the fifth strategic plan of the Ramsar Convention marked a shift from isolated wetlands conservation efforts to a more integrated, globally aligned framework. The focus on measurable targets will bring much-needed tangibility to the sector, while incorporating aspects such as culture and sustainable lifestyles, which strengthen the developing-country imprint on conservation pathways. India now wields greater influence in the Convention by establishing the largest network of Ramsar Sites in Asia and by shining a spotlight on sustainable lifestyles and whole-of-society approaches to wetlands conservation. The discussions leading to the development of the national adaptation plan indicated that much needs to be done to embed wetlands in climate actions.

The national programming for wetlands in India is now over four decades old. Emerging from a focus on conserving wetlands for preserving wildlife, especially migratory waterbirds, the national programme has broadened its focus on wetland wise use and the role of wetlands in securing societal benefits. India now boasts a high-resolution wetlands inventory, tools to support integrated management planning and the assessment of management effectiveness, and frameworks for implementing wise use, yet it is apparent that the national efforts are not commensurate with the scale of degradation. It is encouraging that wetlands are receiving the required attention, but the bottleneck is the lack of effective capacity to systematically conserve wetlands. Also missing are robust standard operating procedures that different government departments and agencies, the private sector, and civil society can use to work towards wetlands conservation. We are actively working to develop training systems and improve availability of simple guidance that can support wetlands conservation for wise use.

We also see considerable scope for articulating bold ambitions for wetlands conservation at the national scale. In the last five years, the Government of India has established several policy and programmatic

priorities under climate change, biodiversity and river basin management that provide immense opportunities to scale up and leapfrog the ambit of wetlands conservation and its integration into sector plans and programmes. Benefitting from the above opportunities would require a significant reshaping of the approach to wetlands conservation, which is currently focused on a few sites, most of which are within the protected area network.



The Wetlands International network on World Wetlands Day 2026 launched its ten-year strategy '*Wetlands for Life*', committing the organisation to ambitious targets on wetlands restoration, effective conservation, conservation of wetlands species, and mobilisation of resources to achieve systemic impact on the state of wetlands. The western Himalayas have been identified as one of 12 flagship landscapes where wetland action to trigger transformative change for societies and economies in the near term will be demonstrated. The South Asia programme will be contributing in material terms to the global targets and, in the process, also enhancing our implementation presence, partnerships, and impacts.

In August 2026, the term of the current Governing Body would come to a close. I take this opportunity to thank Dr Sidharth Kaul, President, whose astute guidance over the last nine years has been instrumental in shaping the growth trajectory of Wetlands International South Asia. The invaluable input received from Prof CK Varshney and Prof JK Garg has helped strengthen the technical programmes, and we look forward to their continued guidance and support.

The Annual Report presents a snapshot of the work our team has done under the guidance of the Governing Body and General Body, and in collaboration with numerous partners. We are immensely grateful for the continued support and remain committed to the cause of halting and reversing wetlands loss in the South Asia region and Beyond.

Dr Ritesh Kumar
Director

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWC	Asian Waterbird Census	NIT	National Institute of Technology
AWSN	Asia Wetland School Network	NITI	National Institution for Transforming India
BNHS	Bombay Natural History Society	NPCA	National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems
CAF	Central Asian Flyway	NMCG	National Mission for Clean Ganga
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species	OECM	Other Effective Conservation Measures
CoP	Conference of the Parties	PCCF	Principal Chief Conservator of Forest
CWRDM	Centre for Water Resource Development and Management	PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
DDMA	District Disaster Management Authority	RRCEA	Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia
DDMP	District Disaster Management Plan	SIDA	Swedish International Development Corporation Agency
DoECC	Department of Environment & Climate Change, Government of Arunachal Pradesh	SOC	Soil Organic Carbon
DoEFCC	Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Government of Bihar	SWAK	State Wetlands Authority Kerala
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	TML	Tata Motors Limited
DPS	Delhi Public School	UT	Union Territory
Eco-DRR	Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
FMP	Framework Management Plan	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
GHG	Greenhouse gas	UPFD	Uttar Pradesh Forest Department
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	UPSWA	Uttar Pradesh State Wetlands Authority
GMA	Global Mangrove Alliance	WI	Wetlands International
HOFF	Head of Forest Force	WUCMA	Wular Conservation and Management Authority
IMWBES	Integrated Management of Wetland Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	W4R	Wetlands for Resilience
IMP	Integrated Management Plan	SIDA	Swedish International Development Corporation Agency
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
IKI	International Climate Initiative	SOC	Soil Organic Carbon
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature	SSP	Shared Socioeconomic Pathways
IWC	International Waterbird Census	SWAK	State Wetlands Authority Kerala
LDA	Loktak Development Authority	UT	Union Territory
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
NBA	National Biodiversity Authority	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
NbS	Nature Based-Solutions	UPFD	Uttar Pradesh Forest Department
NCT	National Capital Territory	UPSWA	Uttar Pradesh State Wetlands Authority
NGO	Non-Government Organisation	WI	Wetlands International
		WUCMA	Wular Conservation and Management Authority
		W4R	Wetlands for Resilience

Year at a Glance 2025–26

The programmes of Wetlands International South Asia during 2025–26 covered five themes (Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands, Rejuvenating Wetlands for Water Security, Wetlands as Nature-Based Solution For Disaster Risk Reduction, Conserving Wetland Biodiversity, And Safeguarding Wetlands Carbon). These interventions are structured around three interconnected and broad strategies, namely:



Think

Providing science-base and tools for conservation



Act

Work in specific sites delivering on-ground actions



Inspire

Inspire key actors and stakeholders to deliver results sustainably

Rejuvenating Wetlands for Water Security



- Conducted detailed assessments of 210 wetlands located in the floodplains of River Yamuna

- The Governing body constituted a working group to develop framework for conservation of small wetlands



- Conservation actions initiated in four prioritised wetlands in Muzaffarnagar, Prayagraj, and Ballia districts in Uttar Pradesh and Bhojpur District in Bihar

- Developed a five year plan for conserving wetlands of western Himalayas, as one of the priority landscapes within the Wetlands International's Strategic Intent 2026–35

Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands



- Concluded an assessment of 24 wetland-related judgments adjudicated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and the National Green Tribunal

- The Governing body constituted a working group to develop a comprehensive framework for the national wetland inventory and guidelines for operationalisation of wetland wise use for wetland managers.



- Progressed Management Plans of 13 wetlands. Two Framework management plans and one IMP

was approved by the MoEFCC with a budget outlay of Rs 1.1 crore and Rs 17 crores, respectively



- The coverage of management effectiveness evaluation of Ramsar Sites expanded to 65 wetlands
- Conducted 10 training programmes and sessions on various aspects of wetlands conservation and management, management effectiveness evaluation, and designation of wetlands as Ramsar Sites

- Drafted the resolution of Sustainable Lifestyles for Wetland Wise Use, adopted at the Ramsar COP15
- The proposal for establishing the Ramsar Regional Initiative for South Asia was presented and adopted by the Ramsar National Focal Points at Ramsar COP15

Wetlands as Nature-based Solution for Disaster Risk Reduction



- Concluded climate risk assessments for two Ramsar Sites



- Identified priority intervention zones for community-based mangrove, pond, and canal restoration
Initiated mangrove restoration

interventions across 30 ha in the Gulf of Khambhat region of Gujarat



- In collaboration with SaciWaters, established the Global Mangrove Alliance India Chapter

Conserving Wetlands Biodiversity



- Concluded wetland condition assessment of 835 sites using eight indicators related to the physical,

chemical, and biological conditions of wetlands



- An updated geospatial database of 13,000 wetlands within a 100 km radii of four Tata Motors production

facilities was created, Health cards for 300 wetlands, and FMP for 20 prioritised wetlands were prepared



- Organised AWC India Coordinators' meeting for improving the census, including site coverage, coordination mechanisms, and logistical challenges across regions
- Launched the 2026 mid-winter AWC, covering at least 3,000

wetlands across 33 States and Union Territories

- Launched an AWC India project on eBird to facilitate the streamlined submission of AWC records by eBird users

Safeguarding Wetlands Carbon



- Prepared a peatland probability map for the Indian Himalayan Region and other potential biogeographic zones

- Conducted field assessments of the wetlands of Manipur to ground-truth the peatland probability maps



- In partnership with NITI Aayog, undertook a study to generate robust, science-based estimates of

carbon stocks in Indian wetlands and assess their role in climate change mitigation

Communications and Outreach



- Published the tenth volume of the newsletter Sarovar, on the theme of 'Wetlands Regulation'
- Constituted an editorial board for the Newsletter with Dr Sidharth Kaul as the Chief Editor, Prof KV Jayakumar, Dr Lalitha Vijayan,

Prof JK Garg, Dr Ajit Patnaik as members, and Dr Ritesh Kumar as Managing Editor

- Developed a compilation on the cultural values associated with India's Ramsar Sites, released by MoEFCC on World Wetlands Day



- Celebrated World Wetlands Day 2025 with a public event in New Delhi aligned with the global theme of '*Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage*'. Dr Balakrishna Pisupati (Country Head, UN Environment Programme India) was the chief guest of the event.

- Set up a Wetlands Learning Centre as a knowledge and awareness generation hub for students at Government High School, Korzok (Puga), near the Tsomoriri Wetland in Ladakh

→ The 18th Annual Meeting of the General Body was held on September 19, 2025. The annual report and audited financial statements for the period April 2025–March 2026 were adopted at the meeting. The General Body also approved amendments to the Rules and Regulations of the Society.

→ 20 members were added to the Society as General Body Members. The total membership in the Society increased from 59 to 79 members, including 12 founder members, 13 nominated members, 46 general members, one institutional member, and seven student members.

Year at a glance

2025 – 2026



Think

Providing science-base and tools for conservation



Act

Work in specific sites delivering on-ground actions



Inspire

Inspire key actors and stakeholders to deliver results sustainably

PROGAMMES

TARGETS PLANNED

TARGETS ACHIEVED

Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands



21 Ramsar Sites
1,60,000 ha



56 Ramsar Sites
~13,00,000 ha



13 wetlands
4,00,000 ha



65 Ramsar Sites
11,86,417 ha

Rejuvenating Wetlands for Water Security and DRR



42 Ramsar Sites
5,663 ha



3 wetlands
8,539.5 ha



207 wetlands
1,366 ha

Wetlands as Nature-based Solution for Disaster Risk Reduction



573 wetlands
20,000 ha



2 wetlands
266 ha

Conserving Wetland Biodiversity



300 wetlands
64,000 ha



75 wetlands
10,000 ha



300 wetlands
64,000 ha

Safeguarding Wetland Carbon



>100 wetlands
1,70,000 ha



4 wetlands
10,000 ha



>100 wetlands
1,70,000 ha



4 wetlands
20,000 ha

An aerial photograph of a wetland area. In the foreground, there's a winding, dark water channel surrounded by lush green vegetation. Beyond this, a larger body of water, possibly a river or lake, stretches across the middle ground. In the far background, a city skyline with various buildings and structures is visible under a hazy sky. The image is framed by blue wavy borders on the top and bottom.

Rejuvenating Wetlands for Water Security

Asita East, New Delhi / @Ravi Prakash



PROJECTS

- *Conserving and Sustainably Managing Three Priority Wetlands of Uttar Pradesh*
Funded by NMCG-UPSWA
- *Conserving and Sustainably Managing Gangetic Floodplain Wetlands of Bihar*
Funded by NMCG
- *Conserving and Sustainably Managing Yamuna Floodplain Wetlands in Delhi*
Funded by NMCG

HIGHLIGHTS



Total Wetlands
213 wetlands



Area
14,202.5 ha



Funding leveraged
Rs 7.66 Cr

Conserving 742 ha of prioritised floodplain wetlands of the River Ganga

Nathmalpur Bhagad, Bhojpur, Bihar	40 ha
Kalewala Jheel, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh	88 ha
Numaiya Dahi Jheel-Kheduva Taal, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh	579 ha
Dahtal Reoti, Ballia, Uttar Pradesh	35 ha

Rejuvenating Floodplain Wetlands of River Ganga in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

During 2022–25, Wetlands International South Asia, with the financial support of NMCG and in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bihar, undertook a detailed inventorisation of 124 wetlands within three sub-basins of the River Ganga. Of these, 19 wetlands were categorised as high priority due to their high hydrological functions and threats. Based on the findings of the inventory, rejuvenation of Nathmalpur Bhagad, a floodplain wetland spanning 40 ha in Bhojpur district of Bihar, has been initiated. The NMCG has sanctioned Rs 2.29 crores to the Bhojpur Forest Division for rejuvenation interventions, which include maintaining hydrological connectivity with the wetland catchment, maintaining and improving habitat quality to support the diversity of wetland-dependent species, and enhancing individual and collective capacity and opportunities for stakeholders to participate and contribute to wetland management. Wetlands International South Asia is a technical partner to this project and is supporting a detailed inventory of the site, capacity development for stakeholders, research on climate risk assessment, and the generation of information needed for species and habitat conservation. Implementation of the project will take place from April to December 2026.

In Uttar Pradesh, Wetlands International South Asia continued to support the rejuvenation of Kalewala Jheel (Muzaffarnagar district), Numaiya Dahi Jheel-Kheduva Taal (Prayagraj district), and Dahtal Reoti (Ballia district). These

three projects have emerged from the floodplain wetlands inventory of the River Ganga in Uttar Pradesh, carried out by the organisation, in collaboration with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department during 2020–22. Missions to support site interventions were held in May and June 2025, and their recommendations were used to redesign the project and revise budgetary allocations.



The Divisional Forest Officer, Ballia and the team from Wetlands International South Asia interacting with the local community members to discuss the management interventions for the conservation of Dahtal Reoti wetland

Conserving Floodplain Wetlands of the River Yamuna

As a part of efforts to rejuvenate the River Yamuna, the NMCG has provided financial support to Wetlands International South Asia to undertake systematic inventorisation and management planning for wetlands located within a 10 km buffer around the River Yamuna channel in New Delhi. Formal approval for the project was accorded in July 2025 for implementation till June 2026.

Inventory of 207 wetlands, spanning over 664 ha, of the floodplains of River Yamuna undertaken to prioritise management interventions

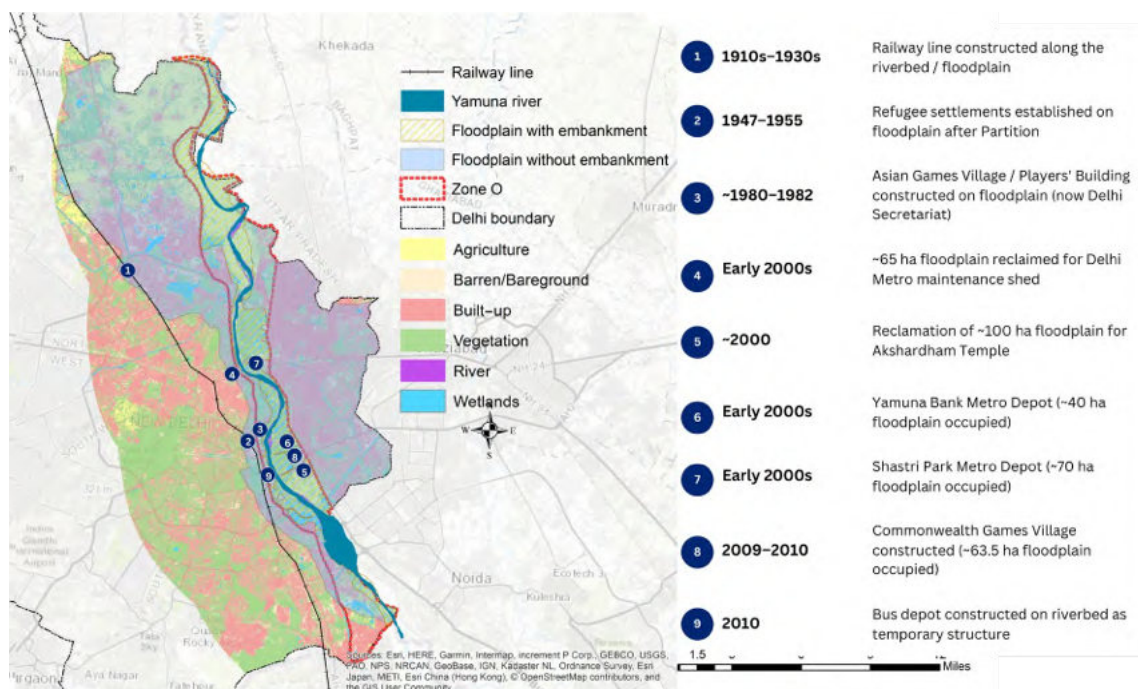
Delhi is an ancient city, with the earliest habitation dating back to 500–1,000 BCE. The Yamuna River and the Delhi Ridge (part of the over 1,500-million-year-old Aravalli Range) have shaped the growth of the City, with the river serving variously as a defensive barrier, a trade and navigation route, and a water source. The City of Shahjahanabad (presently known as Old Delhi) was built along the eastern bank of the River in the 17th century. Until the Mughal period, the River Yamuna and its floodplains represented the flowing part of city life. During Shah Jahan's rule in

Shahjahanabad, the Yamuna River was an important waterway connecting Delhi and Agra. The Mughals built the Red Fort on the banks of the River Yamuna, and it has a specific entrance, the Khizri Darwaza, which connected the Fort to the River.

Around 1900, the British transferred the country's capital from Calcutta to New Delhi, choosing the area between the Delhi Ridge and the Yamuna to establish the new capital. The city was planned on the principles of the Garden City, and the growth was deliberately positioned to the west of the River Yamuna. During the British era, a railway line along the riverbed was constructed, followed by a ring road. Maps also indicate the presence of lower embankments in the 1930s, which were subsequently elongated and strengthened for flood protection.

Post-independence, the Yamuna floodplains have been subject to rampant encroachment and conversion, including the setting up of informal settlements, the development of roads and embankments to contain flood pulses, and conversion for various purposes.

Wetlands within the floodplain region exist as lentic and lotic formations within wide-ranging geomorphic units, including the active river channel (which experience periodic flooding), the inactive floodplain (the older, higher floodplain, which is no longer inundates), and the interfluvies (the region between two rivers). The entire active floodplains bear wetland characteristics, and hence it is treated as a contiguous wetland



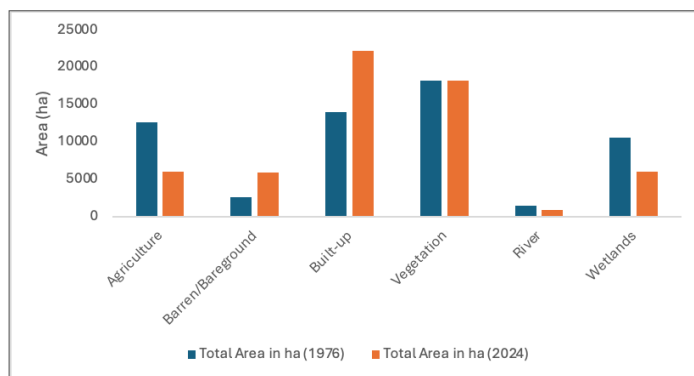
A timeline of various development projects around the Yamuna floodplains

characterised by the transient nature of wetlands, formed in response to variations in river hydrology and sedimentation processes.

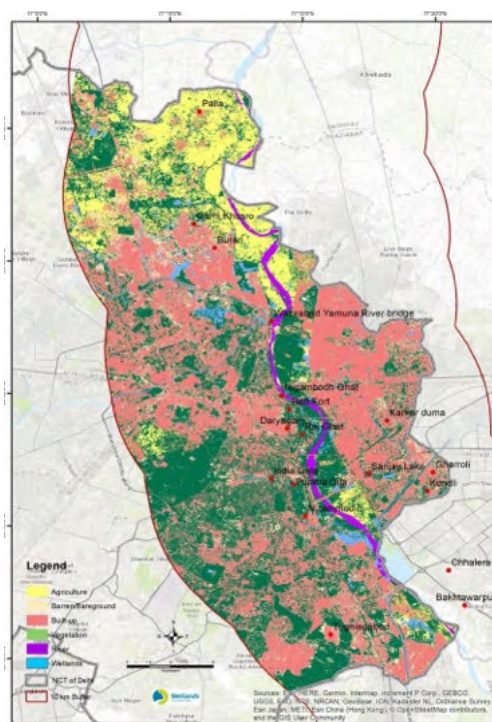
Under the project, wetland dynamics over the last fifty years were assessed using post-monsoon satellite images (October–November) of 1976 and 2024 within a 10 km buffer region along the main channel of the River Yamuna. The 2024 wetland extent and land use/land cover (LULC) were mapped using Sentinel-2 images at 10 m resolution (1:5,000 scale), while Landsat MSS imagery at 60 m resolution was used for 1976 (suitable for 1:50,000 scale mapping). The mapping revealed that the 10 km buffer region contains 510 wetlands (excluding STP structures and canals). The project defines the floodplain as the 32,500-ha area that would flood in a 1-in-25-year event without embankments; Delhi's Master Plan designates it Zone O (9,700 ha),

with 5,770 ha forming the active floodplain likely to flood under this scenario with embankments in place. Treating this active floodplain as a single wetland system, its area shrank 42% over 28 years, from 10,651 ha in 1976 to 6,132 ha in 2024, with direct hydrological costs: an established water-balance method estimates this loss alone has cut annual groundwater recharge by about 681 MCM, rising to roughly 1,200 MCM when adjoining agricultural and vegetated land losses are included. Since these wetlands and their recharge function are central to Delhi's water security, this contraction is not just ecological but a measurable shrinkage of the city's natural water infrastructure, and it has also weakened flood buffering, as shown by the record Yamuna flood level of 208.66 metres in 2023 during a medium-intensity flood.

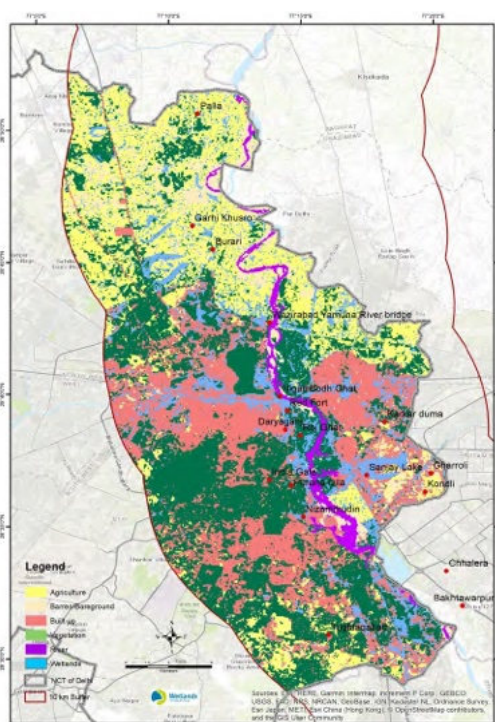
The buffer zone encompasses a total wetland area of 6,132 ha, including areas of the active floodplain, which is regarded as a single continuous wetland. The previous inventories conducted by the Delhi Parks and Gardens Society cover only 222 wetlands, of which 10 are fragments of larger wetlands. The size distribution is highly skewed: 69% of wetlands are smaller than 1 ha, and 14% are smaller than 2 ha. However, a small number of large wetlands (>10 ha) account for more than half the total wetland area. Notable large wetlands include the Okhla Bird Sanctuary (significant portions outside Delhi NCT), Dheepur Marshes (142 ha), Bhalswa Lake (56 ha), and wetland systems along the DND Flyway (68 ha).



Land use and land cover change within a 10 km buffer of the River Yamuna in Delhi



Land use and land cover (including wetlands) in a 10 km buffer of the River Yamuna in Delhi (2024)



Land use and land cover (including wetlands) in a 10 km buffer of the River Yamuna in Delhi (1976)

The LULC analysis reveals severe wetland loss. Localised restoration efforts and the construction of human-made wetlands have contributed to a marginal increase in wetland area in recent years.

The extent of the River Yamuna and its adjoining channels has also changed as the river course has shifted. River channels now cover approximately 960 ha, with large stretches reclaimed for agriculture or converted to vegetation.

During the year, detailed surveys of 207 wetlands in the floodplains were conducted. The survey outcomes will inform the prioritisation of these wetlands and the development of a management framework.

A Strategy for Conserving Small Wetlands

Small wetlands are ecologically significant systems characterised by their limited size but substantial ecological and hydrological value. These wetlands have, since time immemorial, played a critical role in supporting biodiversity and human well-being through water storage and filtration, habitat for wetland-dependent species, a buffer against floods and droughts, livelihood support through pisciculture and agriculture, and as centres for local culture and traditions. Despite their wide-ranging values and contributions to societal well-being, small wetlands continue to be degraded and converted. With the advent of piped drinking water supply and canal irrigation systems, the traditional role of small wetlands has dwindled, leading to their pollution and conversion to other uses. No standard definition or threshold size exists to classify small wetlands. They are not protected under formal conservation categories and are highly prone to pollution, encroachment, and conversion for agriculture or settlements. Much of the effort is placed on developing these wetlands for their role in water security, often achieved through desilting to maintain hydrological capacity, and without consideration of the ecosystem as a whole and its role in the landscape.

Working group established to propose a framework for the conservation of small wetlands

Small wetlands have remained outside the purview of India's national wetlands programme. As the implementation of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 has focused on wetlands

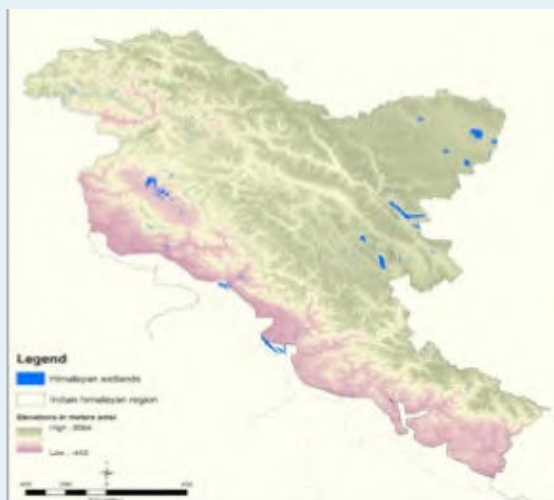
included in the National Wetlands Atlas, wetlands with an area less than the minimum mapping unit (2.25 ha) have been omitted from mapping or inventory. In 2024, the atlas of wetlands published by the Space Application Centre indicated that the country had at least 2.49 million wetlands of size 0.1 ha or smaller, comprising 30% of the total number of wetlands in the country. This assessment is only indicative, as there is no accepted definition of small wetlands in the country.

Wetlands International South Asia's Governing Body has constituted a working group on the small wetlands. The objective is to propose a framework for the conservation of small wetlands and to outline Wetlands International South Asia's role in its implementation. Specifically, the working group will:

- suggest a definition of small wetlands suited for Indian contexts;
- review the current programmes implemented by different agencies to conserve small wetlands and identify their strengths and weaknesses;
- review available best practices for conservation of small wetlands and suggest key practices for replication and upscaling in the Indian context;
- evaluate inventory methods for small wetlands across different biogeographic zones and propose a framework for application in the Indian context;
- recommend a framework for conserving small wetlands, a methodological toolkit and an implementation roadmap; and
- identify the specific roles Wetlands International South Asia could take in implementing the programme.

The working group is chaired by Prof Jay Samant (nominated member, WISA Society) and has Mr JC Kala (Hon. Advisor, AIGWES, Amity University; Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India), Dr Shiraz A Wajih (President, Ex. Associate Professor, MGPG College (Gorakhpur University)), Dr PA Azeez (Former Director In-charge & Senior Principal Scientist, SACON), and Dr TV Ramachandra (Energy & Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science) as members. The first meeting of the working group was held on February 26, 2026, to discuss and finalise the report structure.

Conserving the Blue Lifelines of the Western Himalayas



Wetlands International Strategic Intent 2026–35 focuses on 12 flagship landscapes across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, where wetland action can trigger transformative change in the near term.

The Western Himalayas have been identified as one of these priority landscapes. During the year, the Himalayan team of Wetlands International South Asia worked with wetland authorities and other stakeholders to firm up a five-year plan of action.

The wetlands of the Western Himalayas,

spanning Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, are highly diverse and spread across an altitudinal gradient ranging 600 to 8,500 m amsl. These wetlands serve as the headquarters of the Rivers Indus and Ganga, stopover and wintering sites for over 60% of the waterbirds migrating in the Central Asian Flyway, a buffer against extreme events and cultural and spiritual identities for four major religions and numerous local indigenous communities. The current extent estimated to be 4.5% of the landscape geography is underestimated due to unmapped permafrost and peatlands and misclassification of marsh ecosystems.

Despite their immense value, wetlands of the Western Himalayas are increasingly under threat from rapid climate change, cryospheric shifts, unplanned infrastructure development, tourism expansion, habitat fragmentation, and unsustainable land-use practices. Many wetlands remain poorly mapped and inadequately studied, while governance and management systems often lack the technical and institutional capacity required to address landscape-scale conservation challenges. Additionally, traditional ecological knowledge and community stewardship practices remain insufficiently integrated into conservation planning.

Wetlands International South Asia envisions a future where the wetlands of the Western Himalayas are protected through locally anchored, culturally appropriate, and climate-resilient conservation approaches. A major focus of the programme is the development of a comprehensive knowledge base for Himalayan wetlands through systematic wetland inventorying, climate vulnerability assessments, peatland mapping, and monitoring of ecological changes. These efforts will support informed decision-making and enable governments and stakeholders to prioritise conservation interventions across vulnerable landscapes.

Simultaneously, the initiative seeks to demonstrate practical, landscape-scale conservation and restoration models across priority wetland sites. Through integrated management planning, peatland restoration, and adaptive monitoring systems, the programme aims to showcase approaches that can maintain ecological integrity while strengthening climate resilience and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Wetlands International South Asia envisions a future where the wetlands of the Western Himalayas are protected through locally anchored, culturally appropriate, and climate-resilient conservation approaches.

Wetlands International South Asia will also continue to work closely with government agencies, research institutions, local communities, and civil society organisations to mainstream wetland conservation into key sectors such as tourism, infrastructure development, disaster risk reduction, and climate adaptation planning. By strengthening institutional capacities, fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, and integrating wetlands into policy and development frameworks, the initiative aims to ensure long-term sustainability and replication of conservation efforts across the Himalayan region. At the community level, the programme seeks to revive and strengthen indigenous knowledge systems and local stewardship practices that have historically supported wetland conservation. Through capacity development, outreach, and citizen engagement initiatives, local communities and wetland practitioners will be empowered as active partners in conservation and adaptive management.

By strengthening institutional capacities, fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, and integrating wetlands into policy and development frameworks, the initiative aims to ensure long-term sustainability and replication of conservation efforts across the Himalayan region.





A photograph of a man in a small wooden boat navigating through a wetland area. The man is wearing a light-colored shirt and a dark cap, and is holding a long pole. The boat is surrounded by tall, green reeds. In the background, there is a calm lake reflecting the sky and distant mountains. The foreground shows some aquatic plants and water. The image is framed by green, wavy borders on the top and bottom.

Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands

Loktak Lake, Manipur / @Shivani Negi



PROJECTS

- *Integrated Management of Wetlands Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*
Funded by MoEFCC-GEF-UNEP
- *Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection*
Funded by IKI-GIZ

HIGHLIGHTS



Total Wetlands
78 wetlands



Area
15,86,417 ha



Number of people benefitted
500 people trained in wetlands conservation



Funding leveraged
Rs 17.8 Cr

Progressing Integrated Management Plans

Management Plans Approved

During 2025–26, Wetlands International South Asia prepared the framework management plans (FMP) for Tsokar and Tsomoriri, Ramsar Sites of Ladakh. As per the 2024 guidelines of the MoEFCC, the FMP is a supplementary step towards developing comprehensive Integrated Management Plans (IMP) for conservation and wise use of wetlands. The Technical Appraisal Committee of the MoEFCC, in its meeting held on November 27, 2025, reviewed and approved the implementation of these FMPs for one year, allocating a budget of Rs 1.1 crore.

The FMPs implementation will include ecological and socio-economic assessments and stakeholder consultations needed to develop an integrated management plan. In addition, the implementation will include the installation of signage, establishment of a Wetland Mitra network, and enhancement of surveillance to limit human disturbance.

The final consultations with the line departments and local self-government for finalisation of the IMP of Sasthamkotta, Kerala, for 2026–31 were held in June 2025. The IMP was approved by the Technical Committee of the State Wetlands Authority, Kerala, in July 2025. The IMP forwarded by the State Government was considered by the Technical Appraisal Committee of the MoEFCC in its meeting held on February 11, 2025 and was also approved with a budget outlay of Rs 16.7 crore for five years.

Management Plans Progressed

During the current year, the IMPs for Loktak (Manipur), Wular (Jammu & Kashmir), Khajjiar (Himachal Pradesh), Glaw Lake, Sipit, and Ganga Lake (Arunachal Pradesh), Chilika (Odisha), Sultanpur (Haryana), Ashtamudi, and Vembanad-Kol (Kerala) were progressed.

The IMP of Loktak Lake approved for implementation by the MoEFCC in March 2024 was kept on hold in line with the order of the Hon'ble High Court of Manipur, which had asked for submitting a plan for reorganisation of the Loktak Development Authority (LDA) to enhance its operational effectiveness in conserving and managing the Ramsar Site. At the request of the authority, Wetlands International South Asia prepared a roadmap to revise the LDA's organisational structure. The revised structure enables the authority to deliver specialised functions related to planning and design, wetland monitoring, community engagement, and communications and outreach alongside the existing functions of engineering, watershed management, and general administration. The report was submitted to the authority in March 2025 and has been submitted to the Hon'ble High Court after approval from the Government of Manipur. The Hon'ble High Court of

State/UT	Wetland	Area (ha)	Status	Duration (Years)	Funds allocated (Rs in crores)	Annual outlay (Rs in crores)
Ladakh	Tso Kar	9,577	Approved	1	0.55	0.55
	Tso Moriri	12,000	Approved	1	0.55	0.55
Jammu & Kashmir	Wular	18,900	Submitted	5	155.2	35
Arunachal Pradesh	Glaw lake	12,898	Submitted	5	13.1	4.9
	Sipit	20	Submitted	5	9.9	1.5
	Ganga	41	Submitted	5	17.2	3.5
Himachal Pradesh	Khajjiar	0.45	Submitted	5	2.3	0.9
Haryana	Sultanpur	412	Submitted	5	27.4	13.3
Odisha	Chilika	1,16,500	Submitted	5	74	15.2
Kerala	Sasthamkotta	373	Approved	5	16.7	6
	Vembanad-Kol	1,51,250	Approved (SWA)	5	179.9	82
	Ashtamudi	6,140	Submitted	5	151.3	30
Manipur	Loktak	26,600	Approved	5	61	12
TOTAL	-	3,54,711.45	-	-	709.1	205.4

Manipur lifted the stay on the implementation of IMP in March 2026. Wetlands International South Asia is working with the authority to ensure coordinated implementation of the IMP.

The IMP for Vembanad Kol, prepared by Wetlands International South Asia and CWRDM in 2023, was approved by the State Wetland Authority of Kerala in its third meeting, convened on October 8, 2025, with a budget outlay of Rs 179.9 crore for five years. The plan has been submitted to the MoEFCC by the State Government.

In November 2025, the IMP for Khajjiar Lake in Himachal Pradesh was finalised and submitted to the wetland authority for review. Set in the grasslands of the Kalatop-Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary, surrounded by Cedar trees, Khajjiar has witnessed rapid shrinkage and pressure from high levels of tourism. Unscientific, manual dredging of large parts of the wetland has also adversely impacted the lake. The IMP focuses on regulating sediment inflow from the catchment, addressing tourism pressure through zoning, and putting in place a dedicated wetland monitoring and evaluation system to support adaptive management. The plan is currently under review by the wetland authority.

Within the framework of collaboration with the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Wetlands International South Asia drafted an IMP for Glaw Lake, located within the Kamlang Tiger Reserve landscape. The management plan, incorporating the

comments received from the State Wetlands Authority, was submitted in August 2025. Additionally, technical support was provided to finalise the brief documents and IMPs of Sipit Wetland (Upper Siang district) and Ganga Lake (Geykar Sinyi district) Wetland in Itanagar. Meetings were also held with the Wular Conservation and Management Authority in January 2026 for finalisation of the IMP of Wular (Jammu and Kashmir).

Wetlands International South Asia, in collaboration with the State Wetland Authority Kerala (SWAK), is preparing an IMP for Ashtamudi Wetland, a Ramsar Site in Kerala. During 2025–26, stakeholder consultations were held with Local Self-Government Institutions, line departments, research institutions, civil society organisations, and community representatives, including fisher groups, to discuss management recommendations and build convergence across sectors to implement management interventions. Further, following the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala, SWAK has established the Ashtamudi Wetland Management Unit in accordance with the recommendations in the IMP. Wetlands International South Asia provided technical support during the inaugural meeting of the management unit held in February 2026, presenting key findings of the assessments undertaken, structuring discussions, and guiding stakeholders on coordination and implementation mechanisms.



Meeting to finalise the IMP of Wular held on January 8, 2026 in Srinagar, attended by Mr Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), WUCMA; Mr Altaf Hussain, Project Coordinator, WUCMA and Mr Ovais Farooq Mir, Divisional Forest Officer and former Project Coordinator, WUCMA



Wetlands International South Asia, with the State Wetland Authority, Kerala, conducted field missions towards finalisation of the IMP of Ashtamudi (left to right, Dr John C. Matthew, Programme Manager, Er Kalaiaarasan P., Environmental Engineer, DoECC, Kerala, B. Sivalal, President, Neendakara Grama Panchayat, and Niveditha M.P., Wetlands International South Asia)

The Sultanpur National Park (SNP), situated in Sultanpur Village, approximately 15 km away from Gurugram, Haryana, is an inland wetland-grassland complex harbouring a high diversity of waterbirds, with over 360 species of resident and migratory species using the habitat at different stages of their life cycle. To conserve the biological diversity values, the MoEFCC designated the wetland-grassland complex spanning 143 ha as Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary in 1972, and subsequently as SNP in 1991. In 2010, an area up to five kilometres from the boundary of the National Park was designated as its Eco-Sensitive Zone. In May 2021, the MoEFCC designated Sultanpur National Park as a Wetland of International Importance. The Ramsar Site faces increasing

pressures, including rapid loss of associated wetlands and terrestrialisation of park area, alteration of natural inflows, leading to dependence on the Gurugram canal for maintaining inundation regimes, invasion by African Magur (*Clarias gariepinus*) and extensive violations of the Eco-Sensitive Zone notification.

During the year, Wetlands International South Asia formulated an IMP, which aims at maintaining the naturalness of the Ramsar Site, sustaining habitats of the wetland-dependent species, developing nature tourism, and supporting adaptive management based on monitoring and research. The IMP has been submitted to the Forest Department, Government of Haryana, for approval and implementation.

Wetland Jurisprudence in India

India's wetland governance has evolved significantly since the country ratified the Ramsar Convention in 1982, committing itself to the conservation and wise use of wetlands. This commitment led to the establishment of the National Wetlands Programme and the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010, later revised in 2017, which, along with constitutional principles and judicial interpretations, form the basis of wetland regulation in India. During the year, Wetlands International South Asia reviewed 24 wetland-related judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal (2010–2023) to assess judicial interpretation of wetlands. The key findings are summarised below.

Reasons for Conflict

In the cases examined, conflicts emerged due to (a) violations of constitutional provisions by the developmental projects; (b) violations of the provisions of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010/2017, and other extant regulations; and (c) ownership and jurisdiction over the wetland in focus.

Legal Interpretation of the Term 'Wetlands'

In several cases, courts were required to determine whether the land in question qualified as a wetland, with petitioners using ecological criteria and respondents disputing notification under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules or classification. Verdicts varied, with some courts protecting non-notified or human-made wetlands, particularly in light of the directions in *MK Balakrishnan v. Union of India*. In other matters, courts held that the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010/2017, were inapplicable where the wetland had not been notified or was excluded from the statutory definition.

Key Arguments for Wetland Protection and Preservation

Arguments supporting wetland conservation were largely based on the public trust doctrine, precautionary principle, sustainable development, and polluter pays principle. These approaches helped prevent encroachment, restore wetlands, and balance development with conservation.

Key Arguments for Non-Wetland Usage

Arguments supporting the conversion of wetlands for non-wetland purposes were advanced on grounds of economic development, employment generation, tourism promotion, and public interest. In several cases, respondents challenged the applicability of wetland regulations by disputing the land's classification as a wetland or asserting prior non-wetland use. Additional arguments relied on permissions or environmental clearances granted before the notification of Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010/2017, or the related Coastal Regulation Zone Notification of 1991/2011 came into force. The article can be accessed at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13880292.2025.2500813>

Management Effectiveness Assessment of Ramsar Sites

Management effectiveness assessment expanded to 65 Ramsar Sites

MEE Scores	No. of Ramsar Sites
Very Good (>80%)	6
Desirable (50% to 80%)	39
Moderate (25% to 50%)	15
Low (<25%)	5

Wetlands International South Asia expanded coverage of management effectiveness evaluations of Ramsar Sites during the year, bringing 30 additional sites under its purview. The total number of Ramsar Sites for which evaluations have been completed stands at 65. The tool is structured around responses to 34 questions which relate to the aspects of planning, inputs, process, outputs and outcomes. As part of the Amrit Dharohar initiative, the MoEFCC envisages establishing a METT score baseline for all Ramsar Sites by 2026, with subsequent biennial reviews.

The overall management effectiveness scores across the 65 Ramsar Sites ranged

from 13% to 92%, with the majority of sites (39) falling within the desirable category (scores between 50% to 80%), 15 achieving moderate performance (scores between 25% to 50%), and only six sites attaining very good management effectiveness scores (>80%). The MEE scores highlight the need for structured support to design, implement, monitor, and periodically adapt the management of Ramsar Sites, geared toward achieving outcomes that maintain ecological character and sustain the delivery of ecosystem services.

The analysis of management effectiveness revealed gaps across various management stages that need to be addressed to strengthen the management of Ramsar Sites. There is a need for alignment with the NPCA's diagnostic approach, inadequate wetland ecological evaluations, and insufficient mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and review. At the input level, gaps in technical skills, irregular funding, and a lack of necessary infrastructure hinder effective management. In terms of processes, implementation of management plans, stakeholder coordination, and wetland monitoring are limited to a few sites, and the information needed for adaptive management is inadequate.



Number and percentage of Ramsar Sites across the management stages of METT					
Management Category	Planning	Inputs	Process	Outputs and Outcomes	Overall
Low (Needs urgent attention) Scores <25%	3 (5%)	6 (9%)	6 (9%)	4 (6%)	5 (8%)
Moderate (Possibility of progressing towards Desirable) Scores 25% to 50%	10 (15%)	19 (30%)	16 (25%)	14 (22%)	15 (23%)
Desirable (essential conditions for effective management in place) Scores 50% to 80%	36 (55%)	34 (52%)	34 (52%)	39 (60%)	39 (60%)
Very good (high compliance with national and international management benchmarks) Scores >80%	16 (25%)	6 (9%)	9 (14%)	8 (12%)	6 (9%)
Total assessed: 65 Ramsar Sites					

Support to Wetland Authorities

Wetlands International South Asia is a member of the Wetlands Authorities of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and the NCT of Delhi. The organisation has been providing handholding support to the wetland authorities with which WISA has a long-standing association—the most significant being Loktak Development Authority (with respect to the implementation of water allocation policy), Chilika Development Authority (with respect to fisheries policy), East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (with respect to implementation of integrated management plan), and Arunachal Pradesh Wetland Authority. A wetland ground-truthing protocol was developed for the Chhattisgarh State Wetland Authority to support the identification and notification of wetlands.

Capacity Development for Integrated Wetland Management

In 2025–26, Wetlands International South Asia organised three training workshops on integrated wetland management for the line departments, agencies and stakeholders of Ladakh and Delhi. These workshops were attended by more than 150 participants and were focused on compliance with existing regulations, management planning, exposure visits, and hands-on sessions to develop brief documents and health cards. A workshop on management effectiveness tracking tool for wetland managers in Eastern and North-Eastern States was organised with GIZ-India, providing hands-on support for over 30 participants from Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and West Bengal.



Workshop on management effectiveness tracking tool was organised for wetland managers of Eastern and North-Eastern States in Kolkata in May 2025



Workshop on integrated wetland management was organised for wetland managers and line departments of two districts of Ladakh

In addition, three individual sessions on wetlands were delivered by Dr Ritesh Kumar, Director at Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, from September 2025 to January 2026, as part of mid-career training and professional skill upgradation courses for Indian Forest Service Officers. Over 100 participants attended these trainings.

More than 10 training workshops and sessions on wetlands conservation

~500 participants

Four training workshops on Asian Waterbird Census and wetlands management planning were conducted at Pune (Maharashtra), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Ranchi (Jharkhand), and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) during October–December 2025. These workshops were attended by 200 participants, mainly from the Tata Motors staff and dealer network.

In April 2025, Arghya Chakrabarty conducted a session on Ramsar Information Sheets for national Ramsar focal points of 18 countries of South and South East Asia as part of a training workshop organised by the RR-CEA at Suncheon, Korea.

Support for the National Wetlands Programme

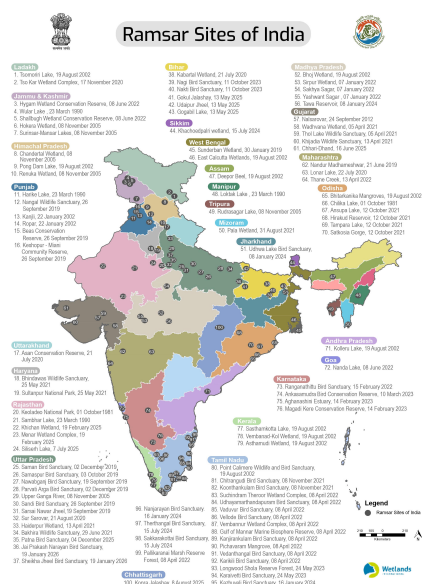
Wetlands International South Asia is a knowledge partner to the Wetlands Division of the MoEFCC and provides support to the implementation of the national wetlands programme. Major contributions during

the year included drafting the resolution presented by India on Sustainable Lifestyles for Wetlands Wise use, which was adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties held in July 2025 in Zimbabwe. The organisation also supported the documentation and compilation of the Ramsar Information Sheets for eight Ramsar Sites. These wetlands were designated as Wetlands of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention in the year. The number of Ramsar Sites in the country has increased to 100.

Wetlands International South Asia has also contributed towards the integration of wetland conservation and management as a key thematic area in India's National Adaptation Plan within the Forest & Ecosystem and Biodiversity chapter. Ms Dayadra Mandal participated in the write-shops and stakeholder consultations organised by the MoEFCC between May and December 2025 towards the finalisation of the same.

Firming Up the South Asia Regional Initiative

Wetlands International South Asia, in collaboration with the regional and international partners, has taken critical steps to advance a regional mechanism for wetlands conservation under the Ramsar Convention. The proposed Ramsar South Asia Regional Initiative aims to strengthen cooperation among South Asian countries, most of which are Ramsar Contracting Parties, by fostering the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices for the wise use of wetlands. Towards establishing the regional initiative, Wetlands International South Asia organised a side event, 'Strengthening Regional Collaboration for Wetlands Conservation in South Asia', at the 15th meeting of the conference of the contracting parties, held in July 2025 in Zimbabwe. The event brought together the Ramsar National Focal Points from South Asian countries, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka and representatives from leading international organisations. The proposal for establishing the regional initiative was presented and adopted by the Ramsar National Focal Points.





The proposal for establishing Ramsar Regional Initiative for South Asia was discussed and adopted at a side event organised during Ramsar COP15

Developing a Proposal for Wetlands Classification and Inventory

A systematic inventory of wetlands is the foundation for policies and programmes to conserve and manage them effectively. While five iterations of the national wetlands inventory have been published in India, their utility has been severely curtailed by the lack of a well-defined and hierarchical wetland classification system.

The Governing Body of Wetlands International South Asia has constituted a working group on the wetlands inventory to develop a comprehensive framework for the national wetland inventory to discern the status and trends in wetland extent and condition, and to guide policy and programmatic priorities. Specifically, the working group will:

- a. review the inventory approaches, including wetlands classification system and mapping methods used for preparing national wetland atlases to date, and identify strengths as well as weaknesses;
- b. review some of the international best practices in preparing a national wetlands inventory and identify those that would be useful in the Indian context;
- c. evaluate the inventory methods suited for various wetlands types in different biogeographic zones, including suggesting mapping methods and approaches;
- d. evaluate the wetlands inventory needs for various user groups;
- e. propose a national wetlands inventory framework for India and a mechanism to deliver the inventory, including areas for capacity development and technology integration;
- f. suggest the ways in which Wetlands International South Asia could engage with the development of the national wetlands inventory.



The working group is chaired by Prof JK Garg (Formerly Director, Tribhuvan College of Environment & Development Sciences, Nalanda University Centre, Neemrana) and has Prof Manish K Goyal (Professor of Civil Engineering, IIT Indore), Dr Rohith AN (Assistant Professor, IIT Delhi), Dr Rupak De (Retired PCCF and HOFF, Uttar Pradesh), Dr Praveen Gupta (Scientist, Space Application Centre, ISRO), and Dr Anish K Dua (Prof (Retired) Guru Nanak Dev University) as members. The first meeting of the group was held on February 27, 2026, wherein the report structure and elements were discussed.

Developing a Proposal and Decision-making Framework for Wetlands Wise Use

Wise use of wetlands has been defined by the Ramsar Convention as the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development. A range of tools, such as wetlands inventory, assessment, and monitoring; assessment and valuation of ecosystem services; landscape-scale management; and integration of wetlands into sectoral development plans, programmes, and investments, have been developed to support wetlands managers in achieving wise use.

Despite the centrality of the wise-use concept, the term remains vague in its meaning and in its application to wetland management. For example, in the case of East Kolkata Wetlands, which was hailed as one of the first eight wise use case studies by the Ramsar Convention, it now struggles with challenges of high-level contamination of the site with prolonged waste deposition. Similarly, in Chilika lagoon, tourism has now become a threat to the Irawaddy dolphins and the wider ecosystem.

The Governing Body of Wetlands International South Asia has constituted a working group to

develop guidelines for operationalisation of wetland wise use for wetland managers.

Specifically, the working group will:

- a. assess the implications of the wetland use concept for the design and implementation of wetland conservation interventions;
- b. review the existing wetland management practices prevalent in India through the lens of wetland wise use and identify complementarities and divergences;
- c. recommend a framework for the application of the wetlands wise use concept for wetland management in the Indian context;
- d. recommend a suite of indicators that can be used to assess whether a particular wetland management intervention adheres to wise use concept;

- e. suggest capacity development needs and approaches to sensitise wetland managers on wetland wise use concept; and
- f. recommend the role Wetlands International South Asia should play in the meaningful application of wise use concept in wetlands management.

The working group is chaired by Dr Sidharth Kaul (President, WISA Society) and has Dr Ajit K Pattnaik (Formerly PCCF, Government of Odisha), Prof K.C. Malhotra (Professor Emeritus, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata), Ms Archana Chatterjee (Programme Manager, IUCN-India), Dr Syed Ainul Hussain (Centre for Biodiversity and Sustainability Science), and Dr KK Vass (Formerly Director, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute) as members. The first meeting of the working group was held on February 26, 2026, wherein the guidelines structure and reporting framework were discussed and finalised.

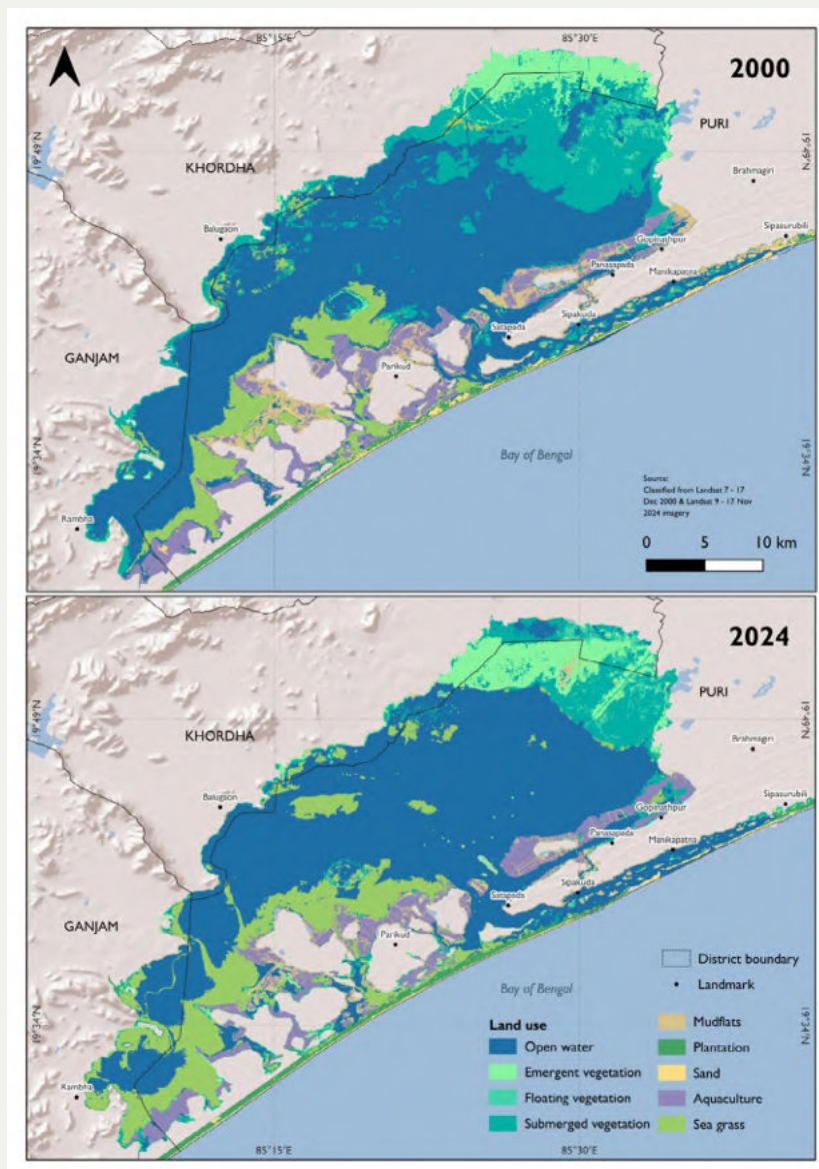
Revisiting the Ecological Restoration of Chilika

In 2001, the hydrological restoration of Chilika, which led to the removal of the Ramsar Site from the Montrux Record, was celebrated with the Ramsar Award.

In 2012, Wetlands International South Asia and the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) drafted the first site management plan for the Ramsar Site, taking into account ecological and hydrological data and stakeholder consultations. Since then, two iterations of management plans were implemented till 2025. In 2026, Wetlands International South Asia, at the request of CDA, took the initiative to revise the management plan for the next five years.

The observed bird diversity increased from around 150 species in the 1980s to 224 species in 2011 and 228 species in 2025, while annual bird abundance rose from 0.8 million in 2016 to 1.1 million in 2025. The Irrawaddy dolphin population recovered from about 20 individuals in 1990 to 156 in 2011, declined temporarily to 121 in 2017, and increased again to 159 in 2025. The average fisheries production increased from approximately 4,800 MT before the 2000 hydrological intervention to around 13,000 MT in recent years, while seagrass cover expanded from 24.8 km² in 1999 to 102 km² in 2012 and 169.2 km² in 2019, indicating substantial ecological recovery.

While the key outcomes of hydrological restoration, such as fish catch (which hovers at around 17,000 metric tonnes annually), maintenance of the salinity gradient, and diversity of species representing freshwater, brackish, and marine environments have sustained over time, there are several indicators of stress in the ecosystem. There has been a resurgence of illegal prawn culture around the lagoon. Bathymetric studies and



A comparative picture of land use and land cover in Chilika between 2000 and 2024

the propagation of *Phragmites* beds in the northern sector indicate progressive siltation. While the connection to the sea is active, the inlet has migrated by over 7 km since 2000. The size of fish has declined for several species due to increased capture of the juveniles. Chilika is increasingly exposed to microplastic pollution originating from runoff, fishing gear, and tourism-related litter. The socio-economic surveys indicated an increasing dependence on fisheries and tourism and a gradual decline in agriculture. While the income from fishing has nearly doubled in nominal terms during 2007–2025, credit from informal sources remains significant (although the proportion of dependence on local moneylenders has considerably declined). The fish marketing structure continues to be dominated by moneylenders and middlemen, constraining fishers' bargaining power and income stability. As the East Coast is more frequently affected by cyclones, disaster risk and related disruptions have become more prominent. As a part of the management plan revision, the ecological, hydrological, and socio-economic baselines have been updated, and the risks of adverse change in ecological character have been reassessed. A socio-economic survey of 650 households was conducted during July to September, 2025. The first draft of the management plan will be presented for stakeholder consultations in July 2026.

TEAM • Suchita Awasthi • Dr Asghar Nawab • Dhruv Verma • Kalpana Ambastha • Apoorva Thapa • Kamal Dalakoti • Preethi Vasudevan • Arif Ahmad • Anil Fartiyal • Aditi Patial • Umang Agnihotri • Dayadra Mandal • Sridhar A • Niveditha MP



Wetlands as Nature-based Solutions for Disaster Risk Reduction

Ashtamudi, Kerala / @Suchita Awasthi



PROJECTS

→ *Assessing Climate Change and Disaster Risk Co-Benefits of Wetlands Management*

Funded by GIZ-India

→ *Integrated Management of Wetlands Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*

Funded by MoEFCC-GEF-UNEP

HIGHLIGHTS



Total Wetlands

2 wetlands



Area

266 ha



Number of people benefitted

ESSVA conducted for 715 households

Applying the Climate Risk Assessment tool to two Ramsar Sites

In 2023, Wetlands International South Asia and GIZ-India contributed to the development of a Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) tool to enable wetlands managers and stakeholders to include climate risks in wetlands management planning. During the year, the tool was applied to two Ramsar Sites, Chilika (Odisha) and Kabartal (Bihar), to enable the incorporation of climate risks and responses in management planning.

The tool is structured into two parts: impact and vulnerability assessment, and adaptation planning. The former includes determining the scope and target assets, conducting baseline assessment, assessing the impacts of climate change on the assets, assessing the capacity to avoid or recover from the impacts, and scoring and ranking vulnerability. The second part includes identifying adaptation options to address the impacts, defining the priority measures, and preparing the adaptation plan and supporting measures. For both sites, temperature and precipitation projections for the 2050s were generated using an ensemble mean of four Global Climate Models to minimise uncertainty. These models simulate moderate (SSP2-4.5) and high (SSP5-8.5) emission pathways across three distinct seasons.

Climate projections

Kabartal

Precipitation	South-west monsoon	North-east monsoon	Non monsoon
SSP2-4.5 (2041-2060)	↑ 13% (South-west monsoon)	↓ 12% (North-east monsoon)	↓ 9% (Non monsoon)
SSP5-8.5 (2041-2060)	↑ 16% (South-west monsoon)	↓ 10% (North-east monsoon)	↓ 7% (Non monsoon)
Temperature	South-west monsoon	North-east monsoon	Non monsoon
SSP2-4.5 (2041-2060)	↑ 0.38°C (South-west monsoon)	↑ 1.62°C (North-east monsoon)	↑ 1.95°C (Non monsoon)
SSP5-8.5 (2041-2060)	↑ 0.71°C (South-west monsoon)	↑ 2.16°C (North-east monsoon)	↑ 2.21°C (Non monsoon)

Chilika

Precipitation	South-west monsoon	North-east monsoon	Non monsoon
SSP2-4.5 (2041-2060)	↓ 57% (South-west monsoon)	↑ 34% (North-east monsoon)	↑ 4% (Non monsoon)
SSP5-8.5 (2041-2060)	↓ 60% (South-west monsoon)	↑ 31% (North-east monsoon)	↑ 3% (Non monsoon)
Temperature	South-west monsoon	North-east monsoon	Non monsoon
SSP2-4.5 (2041-2060)	↑ 1.27°C (South-west monsoon)	↑ 0.62°C (North-east monsoon)	↑ 0.62°C (Non monsoon)
SSP5-8.5 (2041-2060)	↑ 1.59°C (South-west monsoon)	↑ 0.95°C (North-east monsoon)	↑ 0.92°C (Non monsoon)

Note: Projections are relative to the historical period (1995–2014).

Kabartal, Bihar

Kabartal, Bihar's first Ramsar Site, is a riverine floodplain wetland in the Indo-Gangetic plains, spanning approximately 2,620 ha in the Begusarai district. It is internationally important for biodiversity, supporting over 150 bird species, including the threatened Sociable Lapwing and Baer's Pochard, as well as diverse aquatic flora and fauna. The wetland provides critical ecosystem services like flood buffering, groundwater recharge, fisheries, and agriculture. Local communities depend on it for resources such as lotus, water chestnut, and foxnut, while the Jaimangla Garh temple lends it significant cultural value. Target assets relevant to climate risk assessment include: inundation regime, water-holding capacity, water inflow, vegetation cover, habitats for high-conservation-value species, and cultural and aesthetic value.

Under the moderate emission scenario (SSP2-4.5) for 2050, average monthly precipitation during non-monsoon and northeast monsoon is projected to decrease by ~9% and ~12%, respectively, while an increase of ~13% is estimated for southwest monsoon. Temperature projections indicate

Climate projection trends	Inundation Regime					Water Holding Capacity					Water Inflow					Vegetation Cover					Habitats for High Conservation Value species					Cultural and Aesthetic value				
	Exp	Sen	Imp	Ad C	Vul	Exp	Sen	Imp	Ad C	Vul	Exp	Sen	Imp	Ad C	Vul	Exp	Sen	Imp	Ad C	Vul	Exp	Sen	Imp	Ad C	Vul	Exp	Sen	Imp	Ad C	Vul
Temperature																														
Increase in temperature (SW Monsoon-JJAS)	M	M	M	H	M	L	VL	L	VH	L	M	M	M	M	M	H	L	M	H	M	L	M	M	H	M	L	VL	L	VH	L
Increase in temperature (NE Monsoon-ONDJ)	M	VH	H	VH	M	L	VL	L	VH	L	VH	VH	VH	VL	VH	H	M	H	M	H	L	M	M	M	M	L	VL	L	VH	L
Increase in temperature (Non-Monsoon-FMAM)	M	VH	H	VH	M	L	VL	L	VH	L	H	H	H	L	H	H	M	H	M	H	L	H	M	L	M	L	VL	L	VH	L
Precipitation																														
Increase in precipitation (SW Monsoon)	H	M	H	H	M	H	VL	H	VL	VH	H	H	H	L	H	M	H	M	L	M	M	L	M	H	M	M	L	M	H	M
Decrease in precipitation (NE Monsoon)	M	VH	H	VH	M	H	H	H	L	H	VL	VL	VL	VH	VL	VL	VL	VL	M	L	M	H	M	VL	H	M	M	M	H	M
Decrease in precipitation (Non-Monsoon)	L	VH	H	VH	M	H	L	M	M	M	VL	VL	VL	VH	VL	VL	VL	VL	M	L	M	H	M	VL	H	M	M	M	H	M
Extreme Events																														
Increase in extreme rainfall events leading to floods in monsoon	VH	H	VH	VH	H	H	VH	VH	VL	VH	M	M	M	L	M	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	M	H	H	H	L	H
Increase in drought events	H	H	H	VH	M	M	VL	L	VH	VH	VH	VH	VH	L	VH	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	M	H	H	H	L	H
Exp - Exposure Sen - Sensitivity Imp - Impact Ad C - Adaptive Capacity Vul – Vulnerability																														
VL - Very Low L - Low M - Medium H - High VH - Very High																														

Exp - Exposure Sen - Sensitivity Imp - Impact Ad C - Adaptive Capacity Vul - Vulnerability

VL - Very Low L - Low M - Medium H - High VH - Very High

Climate Risk Assessment of Kabartal

consistent warming throughout the year, with maximum temperatures increasing by 0.38°C to 1.95°C, with the maximum increase during the non-monsoon season. Under the high emission scenario (SSP5-8.5) for 2050, similar trends are projected. Average monthly precipitation during non-monsoon and northeast monsoon is projected to decrease by ~7% and ~10%, respectively, while an increase of ~16% is estimated for the southwest monsoon. Maximum temperatures are projected to increase by 0.71°C to 2.21°C, with the maximum increase during the non-monsoon season.

Presently, Kabartal receives much of its inflows during the southwest monsoon (85%). The scenarios indicate an increasing likelihood of floods as the proportion of precipitation received during the southwest monsoon increases. However, a decline in winter precipitation along with increasing temperature would trigger prolonged drying. The water-holding capacity is currently severely compromised due to extensive land levelling for agriculture. This is likely to be further adversely affected by sediments carried in by floods. A prolonged dry wetland with high nutrient enrichment is likely to shift the vegetation composition towards emergent species. Low levels of inundation and colonisation by emergents would make Kabartal less suitable as a

habitat for ducks and waders, including the two high-conservation species (Baer's Pochard and Sociable Lapwing). Changing hydrological conditions are also likely to adversely affect the aesthetics of the Ramsar Site. Suggested adaptation measures include:

- restoring hydrological connectivity between Kabartal and its 16 associated wetlands;
- selective desiltation of shallow depressions and blocked channels;
- managing emergent vegetation to maintain open water habitats, especially prior to the arrival of migratory waterbirds; and
- enforcing regulations to prevent any conversion and encroachment of the wetland area.

Chilika, Odisha

Chilika, the first Ramsar Site of India, is a pear-shaped lagoon spanning 1,16,500 ha and connected to the Bay of Bengal through an elongated channel, connecting across a sand berm. The wetland hosts over a million wintering migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway, alongside the endangered Irrawaddy Dolphin, the endemic limbless skink (*Barkudia insularis*), and six seagrass species. Chilika supports the livelihoods of 0.2 million fishers across

Climate projection trends	Inundation regime					Water level variation					Water inflow from Mahanadi					Salinity					Sedimentation					Inlet dynamics					Tourism							
	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V			
Precipitation																																						
Decrease in precipitation during non-monsoon	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	H	L	M	H	M	H	H	H	L	H	M	H	M	M	M			
Increase in precipitation during south west monsoon	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	M	H	H	H	L	H	H	M	H	M	H	L	L	L	H	L			
Increase in precipitation during north east monsoon	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	M	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	M	VL	L	VH	L			
Temperature																																						
Increase in temperature during non-monsoon	M	H	M	L	M	H	H	H	L	H	M	M	M	M	M	H	H	H	L	M	M	M	M	M	M							M	H	M	M	M		
Increase in temperature during south west monsoon	M	M	M	M	M	M	L	M	H	M	M	L	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	H	L							L	L	L	H	L		
Increase in temperature during north east monsoon	M	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	H	L	M	L	M	H	M	L	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	H	L							H	M	H	M	H		
Extreme events																																						
Cyclone	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	L	H																												
Coastal surge	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	L	H						H	H	H	L	M																		
Sea level rise	M	M	M	M	M	H	M	H	M	H						M	M	M	M	M																		

Climate projection trends	Aquatic macrophytes extent					Sea grass extent					Waterbirds					Irrawaddy dolphins					Fishes					Capture fisheries					Buffer for extreme events					
	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	E	S	I	A	V	
Precipitation																																				
Decrease in precipitation during non-monsoon	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	M	H	M	L	M	H	H	H	L	H	M	H	M	L	M	L	H	M	M	M	H	H	H	L	H	
Increase in precipitation during south west monsoon	H	L	M	H	M	H	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	H	L	M	H	M	L	L	L	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	
Increase in precipitation during north east monsoon	M	L	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	H	VL	M	VH	L	M	L	M	H	M	M	L	M	H	M	M	VL	L	VH	L	M	M	M	M	M	
Temperature																																				
Increase in temperature during non-monsoon	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	M	H	M	L	M	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	L	H	M	M	M	H	H	H	L	H		
Increase in temperature during south west monsoon	M	M	M	M	M	H	M	H	M	H	L	H	M	L	M	H	H	H	L	H	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	L	M	L	L	L	H	L	
Increase in temperature during north east monsoon	M	M	M	M	M	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	M	M	M	M	M	M	H	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L
Extreme events																																				
Cyclone	H	H	H	L	H	VH	VH	VH	VL	VH	VH	VH	VH	VL	VH	VH	VH	VH	VL	VH	VH	VH	VH	VL	VH	VH	H	VH	M	VH	H	M	H	M	H	
Coastal surge	H	H	H	L	H	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	H	H	M	H	M	H	M	H
Sea level rise	M	M	M	M	M	H	L	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	M	M	M	M
E - Exposure S - Sensitivity I - Impact A - Adaptive Capacity V - Vulnerability																																				
VL Very Low L Low M Medium H High VH Very High																																				

E - Exposure S - Sensitivity I - Impact A - Adaptive Capacity V - Vulnerability
 VL - Very Low L - Low M - Medium H - High VH - Very High

Climate Risk Assessment of Chilika

132 settlements and is a famous tourist destination, with the Kalijai temple and archaeological remains at Manikpatna and Palur marking its rich heritage. Target assets relevant for climate risk assessment include inundation regime, freshwater inflow from the Mahanadi Delta fraction, water level variation, salinity, extent of aquatic macrophytes, extent of seagrass, Irrawaddy Dolphin (population size and habitat use), waterbirds (total count and congregation areas), fish breeding and migration, sedimentation, inlet dynamics, capture fisheries, tourism, and buffer for extreme events.

Under the moderate emission scenario (SSP2-4.5) for 2050, annual precipitation is projected to experience a ~7% increase, with average monthly precipitation during non-monsoon decreasing by ~58%, while an increase of ~34% and ~4% is projected for southwest and northeast monsoons, respectively. Temperature projections indicate consistent warming throughout the year, with maximum temperatures increasing by

0.62°C to 1.27°C. Under the high emission scenario (SSP5-8.5) for 2050, similar but more pronounced trends are projected. Annual precipitation is projected to increase by ~4%, with average monthly precipitation during the non-monsoon season decreasing by up to ~60%, while the southwest monsoon is projected to increase by up to ~31%. Maximum temperatures are projected to rise up to 1.59°C.

Projected climate trends indicate a substantial increase in southwest monsoon precipitation and a marked decline in northeast monsoon rainfall, increasing the likelihood of flooding during the monsoon period and prolonged low-flow conditions during the lean season. Rising temperatures may further promote the spread of aquatic macrophytes and increase physiological stress on key biodiversity assets, including waterbirds, fish, and Irrawaddy

Ecosystem Services Shared Value assessed to identify priority intervention zones in Bangladesh Sundarbans

Dolphins. Reduced freshwater inflows during the dry season are likely to increase salinity levels, alter habitat suitability for several aquatic species, and affect inlet dynamics and water exchange processes. Existing threats such as sedimentation and pollution are also likely to be exacerbated under future climate scenarios. Suggested adaptation measures include:

- a. improving water storage and retention capacity across the catchment to enhance buffering during dry periods and regulate flows during extreme rainfall events;
- b. managing excessive macrophyte growth to maintain habitat quality and open-water conditions;
- c. reducing sediment and nutrient inflows through catchment-scale interventions; and
- d. undertaking selective desiltation and restoration of choked channels to improve hydrological connectivity.

Promoting Nature-based Solutions in Sunderbans, Bangladesh

The Wetlands for Resilience (W4R) programme focuses on advancing ecosystem-based, landscape-level approaches for enhancing climate resilience in vulnerable wetland systems, with a key emphasis on the Sundarbans in Bangladesh. Building on initial stakeholder engagement and partnership development, the programme progressed towards operationalising pilot interventions and strengthening the evidence base for nature-based solutions.

During 2025–26, W4R enabled the development of a multi-stakeholder landscape partnership, bringing together civil society organisations, technical institutions, and community actors to move towards more coordinated and integrated wetland management. The programme facilitated consultations with over 20 organisations and supported the development and validation of a Bangladesh W4R Roadmap that outlines priority actions for ecosystem restoration and resilience-building.

A key focus was on generating decision-support knowledge, including initiating the Ecosystem Services Shared Value Assessment (ESSVA) to identify priority intervention zones and inform pilot design. The programme also supported field engagement and consultations, strengthening collaboration with local partners such as Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP), PRERONA, and Jagrata Juba Shangha (JJS), which are working on mangrove restoration, eco-DRR, and livelihoods. The programme also advanced the design of integrated pilot interventions built around nature-based solutions to be implemented in 2026 across three Sundarbans districts in Bangladesh (Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira), including: community-based mangrove restoration and pond and canal restoration for freshwater security.

These interventions explicitly linked ecosystem restoration with food security and blue economy outcomes, particularly through improved fisheries, water availability, and livelihood diversification. The programme also contributed to knowledge development and learning by documenting field practices and initiating case studies and synthesis outputs to support replication and scaling. A strong emphasis was placed on building partnerships and institutional alignment, positioning W4R as a platform for coordinated action in the Sundarbans landscape.

Launch of India Chapter of Global Mangrove Alliance

Wetlands International South Asia and SaciWaters established the Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA) India Chapter in April 2025, as part of the wider Global Mangrove Alliance network, becoming the fourteenth National Chapter within this global community. The GMA India Chapter aims to build a robust, inclusive national platform that unites diverse organisations and sectors to advance mangrove conservation and restoration across the country.

India's vast and varied coastline, where ecological gradients, socio-cultural practices, and governance systems differ sharply between regions, demands a unique model of coordination that is both scientifically rigorous and socially grounded. The GMA India Chapter responds to this need by

convening NGOs, academic institutions, practitioners, coastal communities, and government stakeholders to collectively shape national priorities, share knowledge, and deploy evidence-based strategies.

The GMA-India Chapter convened its first strategic visioning & goal-setting workshop on November 10–12, 2025, in Goa. The workshop brought together GMA-India members to connect, co-create, and collectively shape the Chapter's strategic direction for the years ahead. The workshop was jointly hosted by SaciWATERS and Wetlands International South Asia. During the workshop, the members jointly worked to develop a unified national strategy aligned with GMA 2030 goals; identify key priorities, regional needs, and knowledge gaps across India's coasts; establish thematic Working Groups for research, capacity building, and partnerships; and prepare a time-bound action plan for coordinated implementation.



Participants at the first strategic visioning & goal-setting workshop of the Global Mangrove Alliance-India (<https://www.mangrovealliance.org/>)



Painted Storks in the Ganga River Basin, Bihar / @Umang Agnihotri

Mangrove Restoration in Gujarat

With the support of Dawat-e-Hadiyah, a philanthropic organisation supporting social work and nature conservation, Wetlands International South Asia initiated mangrove restoration interventions across 30 ha in the Gulf of Khambhat region of Gujarat. The project focuses on establishing site-specific, ecologically appropriate mangrove restoration models that integrate scientific assessment with community engagement. Initial efforts included site identification, baseline assessments, and stakeholder consultations, ensuring that restoration interventions are aligned with local ecological conditions and community needs. A key component of the project is promoting community participation in restoration activities, including plantation efforts and stewardship mechanisms. This approach aims to enhance ownership, sustainability, and long-term maintenance of restored mangrove areas, while also supporting local livelihoods. The project also aims to strengthen understanding of mangroves as critical ecosystems for disaster risk reduction, coastal protection, and carbon sequestration.



Reconnaissance visit to the Gulf of Khambhat (from left to right, Mr Rajesh (Local community member), Naushad Theba (Freelance naturalist), Sridhar A and Ravi Prakash (Wetlands International South Asia))

Supporting the Livelihoods of the Hargila Army for Greater Adjutant Stork Conservation in the Brahmaputra Floodplains, Assam

The floodplains of the River Brahmaputra represent a critical ecological corridor in Assam, providing vital habitat for a range of plant and animal species while supporting community well-being through flood buffering, productive fisheries, and cultural sustenance. However, lop-sided developmental planning and lack of recognition of the full range of wetland ecosystem services have created a range of developmental pressures. Recognising the significance of these wetlands, Wetlands International South Asia has identified the Brahmaputra floodplains as a priority action area and during 2024–25, worked with the Forest Department and other stakeholders to develop an Integrated Wetland Management Plan for Deepor Beel to guide site management for five years.

The grasslands and marshes around Deepor Beel are habitats for the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork (*Leptoptilos dubius*). These scavenging birds, which were once widespread, have become endangered due to habitat loss, pollution, poisoning, and negative perception. However, they are now showing signs of recovery through recent community-led conservation initiatives, prominent of which is the constitution of Hargila Army, an all-women conservation movement led by noted environmental activist Dr Purnima Devi Burman. The initiative has empowered women as community conservationists and entrepreneurs through weaving, awareness, and habitat restoration. These efforts contributed to the reclassification of the species on the IUCN Red List from Endangered to Near Threatened.

During 2025–26, seed support in the form of 15 sewing machines was provided to the members of Hargila Army as an incentive for continued community stewardship of Greater Adjutant Stork habitats. This intervention aims to maintain and enhance the incomes of the members through diversification of livelihood opportunities, while enabling members to acquire new skills and strengthen their existing income-generating abilities. Wetlands International South Asia will continue to work with Dr Barman to promote conservation of this species across habitats in Bihar and other parts of India.





Conserving Wetlands Biodiversity

Vadla Dam, Gujarat / @Divyanshu Pawar



PROJECTS

- Asian Waterbird Census
Internal Funding
- Wetlands Winged Voyagers
Funded by Tata Motors
- State of Indian Wetlands
Internal Funding

HIGHLIGHTS



Total Wetlands
300 wetlands



Area
64,000 ha



Number of people benefitted
70 people trained in AWC

Celebrating 40 Years of the Asian Waterbird Census

Waterbirds occupy diverse niches within the food web, from herbivores to top predators, making their presence, diversity, and population trends a direct reflection of the broader ecological status of wetlands. Monitoring waterbirds serves as a vital health check for freshwater and coastal wetlands. Wetlands International is a pioneer of the International Waterbird Census (IWC), one of the world's longest-running citizen science and biodiversity monitoring programmes, operating in over 140 countries.

Under the aegis of the IWC, the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) programme has been held for the last four decades and annually monitors waterbird counts and habitat conditions during the non-breeding season in the Indian sub-continent. The initiative is coordinated by Wetlands International South Asia and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), with support from Bird Count India, State Coordinators, regional birding networks and birding enthusiasts. The National Biodiversity Authority and various State Forest and Wildlife Departments support the AWC to document the occurrence of waterbirds at wetlands of international and local importance.



National Asian Waterbird Census meeting held in Patna on 10–11 May 2025, attended by Dr Sunil Kumar, Hon'ble Minister; Smt. Harjot Kaur Bamhrah, IAS, Chairman-cum-Member, Board of Revenue (formerly Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department), Government of Bihar, along with officials from the Forest and Wildlife Department, state coordinators, and representatives

To strengthen the implementation of AWC and improve the quality and consistency of monitoring efforts, the AWC India Coordinators' Meeting was held on May 10–11, 2025, at Patna, Bihar. Organised with the guidance and support of the Government of Bihar, the meeting brought together 50 participants, including 19

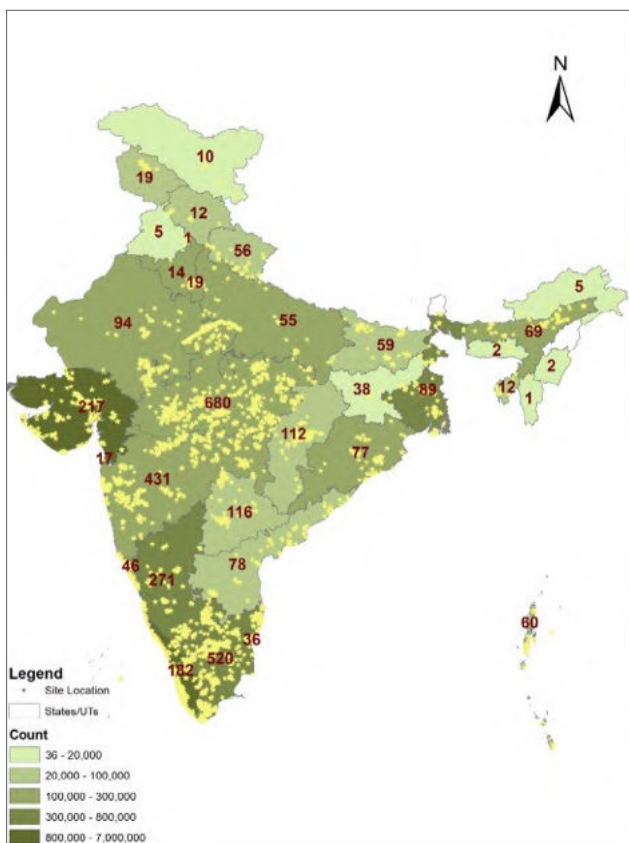
analysis and reporting, updating AWC assessment forms for consistent monitoring of priority sites, and formalising the roles of State Coordinators. A dedicated AWC India project on eBird was also launched in November 2025, with support from Bird Count India, to facilitate the streamlined submission of AWC records by eBird users from 2026 onwards.

These preparatory efforts significantly contributed to the successful implementation of the 2026 mid-winter census, which marked the 40th anniversary of AWC in India and the 60th anniversary of the International Waterbird Census globally. The census was initiated in December 2025 and conducted between January 3–18, 2026, covering at least 3000 wetlands across 33 States and Union Territories.

The AWC 2026 was also conducted in collaboration with Tata Motors across four landscapes: Pune, Sanand, Jamshedpur, and Lucknow. Reports compiled up to March 2026 documented nearly 200 species of waterbirds and wetland-dependent birds, representing a substantial proportion of the 240 waterbird species

The mid-winter Asian Waterbird Census covered at least 3000 wetlands across 33 States and Union Territories.

AWC India State Coordinators or their representatives, Forest Department officials, and bird experts from Bihar. Discussions focused on improving key aspects of the census, including site coverage, coordination mechanisms, and regional logistical challenges. Priority actions identified included standardising and ensuring the timely submission of AWC data across all States and UTs, developing uniform educational and outreach materials, retrieving and compiling historical datasets for long-term trend



The AWC 2026 covered over 3,000 wetlands across the country



First-ever sighting of a Smew at Kaziranga National Park, Assam (@Observador de Aves)



Asian Waterbird Census 2026 carried out in the high-altitude landscapes of Ladakh



Pulicat Lake Asian Waterbird Census 2026 group



Asian Waterbird Census 2026 with Tata Motors held at Pune

recorded in India. Notable surveyed sites included the Nadabet Wetland Complex in Gujarat, which recorded over 1.5 million individuals, Ankasamudra Bird Sanctuary in Karnataka with approximately 0.2 million individuals, and Pallithode Wetlands in Kerala with nearly 0.08 million individuals. Significant observations included several globally threatened species listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, such as Baer's Pochard, Black-bellied Tern, Great Knot, and Spotted Greenshank.

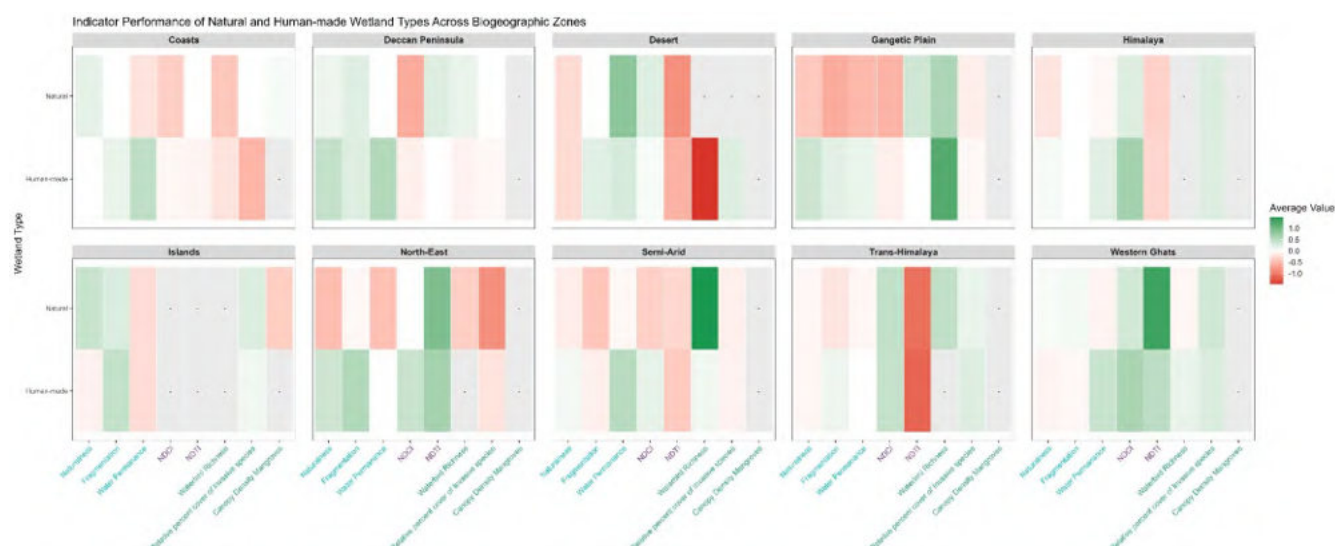
A condition assessment of Indian wetlands

Understanding the state of wetlands in India requires not only mapping their extent, but also assessing their condition, which provides a synoptic view of their overall ecological health and functional integrity. While wetland inventories and extent mapping help establish where wetlands occur and how they are distributed, condition assessment is essential for understanding how these systems are changing over

time, where degradation is occurring, and which wetlands continue to retain ecological integrity.

Under the State of Indian Wetlands project, the assessment of wetland extent and condition has been taken up in two major phases. During 2024–25, the project completed temporal extent mapping for 10,984 wetlands and analysed long-term trends across inland and coastal systems, as well as natural and human-made wetlands. Building on this, during 2025–26, a wetland condition assessment of 835 sites using eight indicators related to the physical, chemical, and biological conditions of wetlands was undertaken. Trends for 1985–2020 were computed for inland and coastal wetlands. Comparison between the trends for the Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, wetlands located in urban and non-urban areas, and those located within and outside protected areas was computed.

The indices for physical condition are positive for human-made wetlands and negative for natural wetlands. At the biogeographic zone level, the decline in the naturalness indicator is the strongest in the North-East, followed by the Gangetic plains,



Trends in wetlands condition indicators for natural and human-made wetlands across ten biogeographic zones

Wetland condition assessed for 835 sites, spanning 3.31 million ha using eight indicators

Deserts, Himalayas, and semi-arid zones. The fragmentation index trends are in a strong increase in the inland natural wetlands of the Gangetic plains. Both natural and human-made wetlands indicate a mild negative trend in the chemical and biological conditions. Amongst natural wetlands, coastal wetlands show the sharpest decline in indicators related to biological condition. Wetlands located

within protected areas have relatively better trends in physical and biological conditions; however, negative trends related to naturalness persist. Wetlands in urban areas exhibit marked deterioration in physical and chemical conditions. Wetlands designated as Ramsar Sites perform marginally better than other sites in terms of physical and biological conditions; however, the differences are not very significant.

TEAM • Dhruv Verma • Arghya Chakrabarty • Apoorva Thapa • Anil Fartiyal • Arif Ahmad • Ravi Prakash • Dakshata Gaikwad • Kalpana Ambastha • Kamal Dalakoti • Dr Asghar Nawab • Umang Agnihotri • Nikita Mishra • Dayadra Mandal • Rani Kumari • Divyanshu Pawar • Preethi Vasudevan • Sridhar A



A Smooth-coated Otter of the River Ganga in Kahalgaon, Bihar / @Umang Agnihotri

Wetlands and Winged Voyagers: A vision to create wetland-positive landscapes around Tata Motors facilities

As part of its corporate sustainability and biodiversity strategy, Tata Motors has partnered with Wetlands International South Asia for a two-year initiative, ‘Wetlands and Winged Voyagers’. The initiative aims to conserve wetlands significant for migratory waterbirds within a 100-kilometre radius of its four production facilities, namely Pimpri Chinchwad (Maharashtra), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Sanand (Gujarat), and Jamshedpur (Jharkhand).

During the year, an updated geospatial database of wetlands within a 100 km radius of four Tata Motors production facilities was created. Over 13,000 wetlands with areas >0.5 ha were mapped using remote sensing, with a representation sample validated by ground truthing. Of these, 300 wetlands were selected for detailed inventories, with data collected on extent, hydrological regimes, species and habitats, threats, ecosystem services, and management needs. The data are used to implement a hydro-geomorphic classification and to assess wetland functions. Health cards for 300 wetlands were produced using field data, and analysis indicates that about 55–60% of these wetlands fall within poor health categories (C–E), with the lower grades arising primarily from missing governance parameters.

During the field surveys, several wetlands supporting high congregation of waterbirds were identified, including Wadla Wetland Complex in Gujarat and satellite wetlands associated with Thane Creek, such as DPS, NRI and TS Chanakya. These observations were shared with concerned wetland authorities, with the request for priority in conservation actions by the State Government. The Gujarat State Wetland Authority has initiated the process of designating Vadla Wetland Complex as a Ramsar Site.

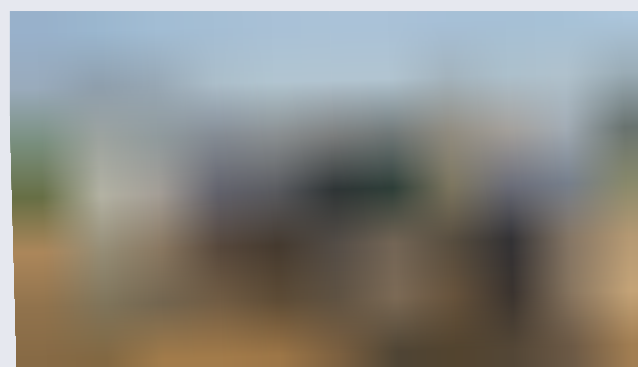
Mid-winter waterbird counts were also undertaken to assess the richness and abundance of waterbirds, especially those migrating in the Central Asian Flyway. Over 70 employees of Tata Motors participated in training and conducted the census. Of the 300 wetlands, 75 have been shortlisted in consultation with State Wetland Authorities for the preparation of Framework Management Plans. Plans for 20 of these sites were completed during the year. The collected data and field observations are being used to develop landscape-scale plans for the four Tata Motors facilities. These landscape plans are intended to bring together other corporates and various government agencies in the implementation of wetland conservation actions and mobilising convergence resources.



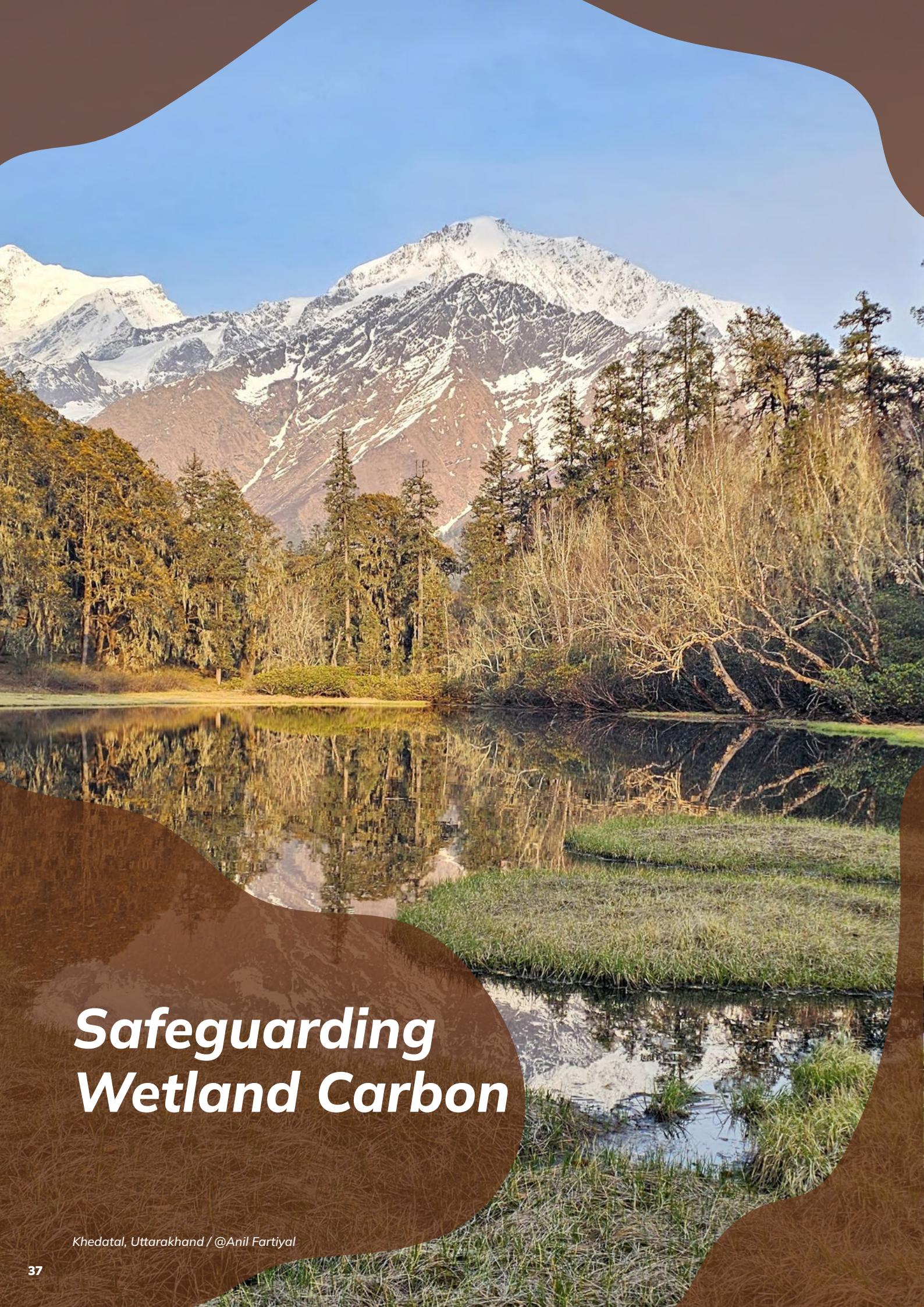
Training workshop on Asian Waterbird Census at Sundarvan, A Nature Discovery Centre in Gujarat



Rapid Assessment of Wetland Ecosystem Services at Kasarsai Dam, Tata Motors Pimpri Chinchwad Landscape, conducted with Tata Group employees

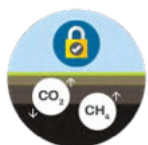


Wetlands International South Asia team with Dr Girish Jathar, Managing Director Srushti Conservation Foundation (centre) and Prof Dr Erach Bharucha, Director Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, Pune (right), during the local stakeholder consultation at Ujjani Wetland, Maharashtra



Safeguarding Wetland Carbon

Khedatal, Uttarakhand / @Anil Fartiyal



PROJECTS

- *Himalayan Peatlands: Inventory and Assessment*
Internal Funding
- *GHG and Indian Wetlands*
Funded by NITI Aayog

HIGHLIGHTS



Total Wetlands
>104 wetlands



Area
1,90,000 ha

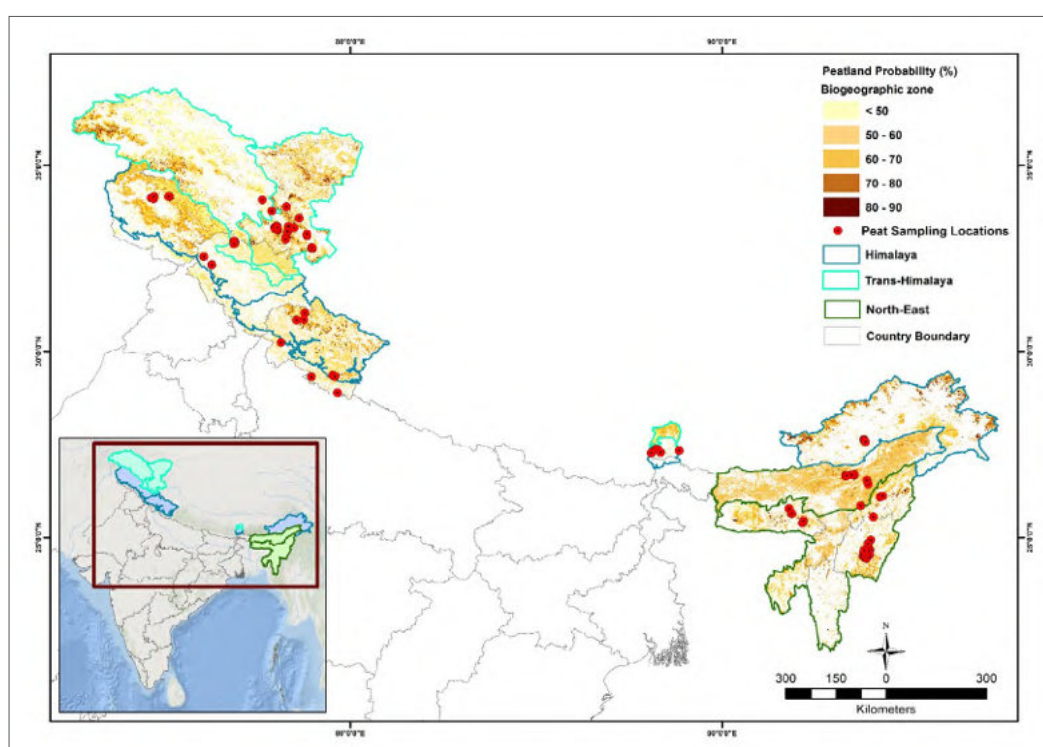
TEAM • Dhruv Verma • Shivani Negi
• Dayadra Mandal • Apoorva Thapa •
Arif Ahmad • Anil Fartiyal

Advancing India's Peatland Assessment: Mapping, Ground-Truthing and Restoration Planning in the Indian Himalayan Region

In 2025–2026, the peatland inventory and assessment work advanced from scattered knowledge and a probabilistic distribution of peatlands to systematic ground-truthing, expanded field assessments into new landscapes, and laid the groundwork for science-based restoration.

With a phased approach, starting with a comprehensive review of literature on peatland occurrence in India and discerning key environmental variables governing their presence in the landscape, a peatland probability map for the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) and other potential biogeographic zones was prepared to locate potential locations with likely occurrence of peat.

The analysis identified probable peatland areas across the IHR, encompassing the Trans-Himalayas, Himalayas, and North-East biogeographic zones. This initial estimate was subsequently refined through field-based learning, in which observations from visited sites and sites with comparable ecological characteristics served as reference points to calibrate and filter the probability outputs. Applying these field-informed thresholds, the refined probable peatland extent across the IHR was estimated at approximately 230,000 ha. Continuing the ground-truthing work across the Indian Himalayan Region, field assessments were extended to the wetlands of Manipur during the post-monsoon and winter seasons. The field missions were undertaken to ground-truth the peatland probability maps by field investigations and consultations with local experts, collect soil samples for carbon stock assessment, and understand



Peatland Probability Map of the Indian Himalayan Region



Peatland Sampling at Nambol Ishok, Manipur (left) and Jhilmil Jheel, Uttarakhand (right)

site characteristics to frame ecosystem-based management strategies.

In collaboration with the Loktak Development Authority, the field assessments were undertaken at Loktak Lake and associated wetlands across Imphal West, Bishnupur, and Thoubal districts. The field assessments verified the presence of peat deposits at Keibul Lamjao National Park, Lamphel Pat, and pockets of Loktak Lake having thick *phumdis* (floating mat vegetation). Laboratory analysis of the collected soil cores indicated a high concentration of organic carbon content, with soil organic carbon values ranging from 16% to 44%. The preliminary assessments highlighted the role of wetlands in sequestration and storage of carbon stock within the IHR. Despite their ecological significance, field observations and community consultations suggested that these peatland-forming habitats are experiencing anthropogenic and environmental degradation, particularly by hydrological alterations, habitat fragmentation and change in land use land cover practices along the fringes.

In parallel with ongoing mapping and assessment efforts, the programme is advancing towards actionable conservation by initiating field restoration and management in four priority peatland landscapes within the Indian Himalayan Region. These pilot interventions are expected to cover approximately 10,000 ha and target the following landscapes: Loktak Lake in Manipur, Khecheopalri in Sikkim, Tsokar in Ladakh, and wetlands in the Kashmir Valley (Mirgund/Shallbugh).

Assessing the Role of Wetlands in Climate Change Mitigation in India

Wetlands International South Asia, in partnership with NITI Aayog, has undertaken a comprehensive study to generate robust, science-based estimates of carbon stocks in Indian wetlands and assess their role in climate change mitigation. Commissioned in September 2025, the study addresses a critical gap: despite their significant contribution to carbon storage and climate regulation, wetlands remain largely under-recognised and under-quantified in India's national climate policies and GHG inventories. Covering India's approximately 16.89 million ha of wetlands across inland and coastal ecosystems, the study pursues three objectives: a) generating a national-level carbon stock estimate for Indian wetlands based on secondary literature, b) estimating GHG fluxes for Indian wetlands based on secondary literature, and c) suggesting measures for preserving and enhancing the importance of wetlands in climate change mitigation. This interim report summarises the findings of the literature review on wetlands and projects the GHG emissions and removals in India.

A systematic review of published literature was conducted alongside a national GHG inventory for the period 2007 to 2018, drawing on the IPCC 2006 Guidelines, the 2013 Wetlands Supplement, and the 2019 Refinement.

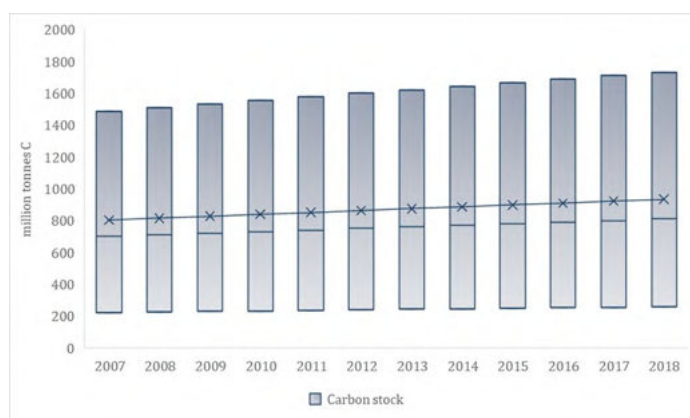
The findings confirm that India's wetlands are a substantial and largely unaccounted climate asset. Carbon stocks are highest and most well documented in mangrove

ecosystems, where soil carbon accumulation drives total ecosystem carbon stocks ranging from approximately 55 to 330 tonnes C per hectare across eastern and southern coastal sites, and up to 290 tonnes C per hectare in the Andaman Islands. Peatlands concentrated in the Himalaya, Trans-Himalaya, North-East, and Western Ghats represent a disproportionately large carbon reservoir relative to their spatial extent, with median stocks of 92.5 tonnes C per hectare in the Himalayan region. Inland wetlands, including floodplains, lakes, and reservoirs, are considerably less studied, with significant research gaps limiting national-level estimates.

A national greenhouse gas inventory for wetlands indicates that wetlands on mineral soils under the land-remaining category are the dominant inland carbon reservoir, with an average stock of 3,324.49 million tonnes C. Peatlands under the land-remaining category hold an average stock of 217.97 million tonnes C, positioning them as a critical inland carbon store whose full extent remains underestimated due to limited field data. Within coastal wetlands, mangroves under the rewetting, revegetation, and creation category record a net average carbon gain of 0.16 million tonnes C. In contrast, drainage-driven losses from mangroves and tidal marshes underscore the carbon cost of coastal wetland degradation.

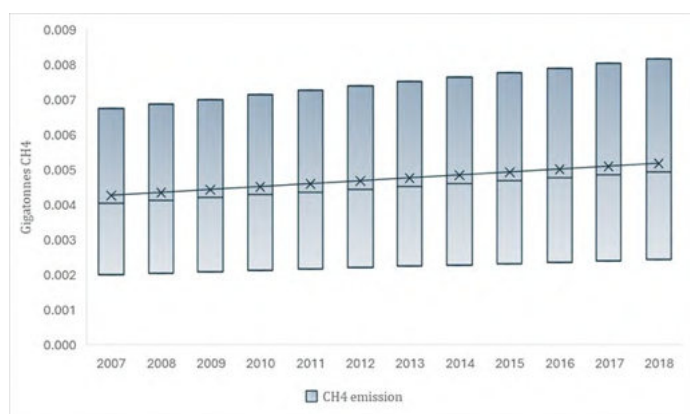
On the emissions side, wetlands on mineral soils emerge as the dominant inland source of methane (CH₄), with average emissions of approximately 0.053 Gt CH₄ over the study period. CH₄ emissions from peatlands and drained organic soils could not be estimated due to the lack of corresponding emission factors, creating a significant gap in future inventory cycles. Flooded lands, particularly ponds, record average CH₄ emissions of approximately 9.31×10^4 Gt CH₄, while reservoirs older than 20 years contribute additional emissions.

A central conclusion of the assessment is that wetland degradation, not natural wetland function, drives anthropogenic climate change. Natural wetlands have historically formed part of a broadly stable global carbon cycle. It is the drainage, conversion, and degradation of wetlands that constitute a net anthropogenic contribution to GHG loading. The results consistently demonstrate that land-remaining categories retain substantially higher carbon stocks than their land-converted counterparts, reinforcing that wetland conservation is among the most effective strategies for maintaining carbon storage. Restoration and rewetting of mangroves and tidal marshes emerge as cost-effective approaches to reduce national GHG emissions and enhance long-term carbon removals.



Carbon stock estimates (million tonnes C) across all wetland types, 2007–2018

Wetlands on mineral soils are the dominant inland carbon reservoir, with an average stock of 3,324.49 million tonnes C



CH₄ emissions (gigatonnes CH₄) across all wetland types, 2007–2018

Wetlands on mineral soils emerge as the dominant inland source of methane, with average emissions of approximately 0.053 Gt CH₄



Communications & Outreach

Dhamapur Lake, Maharashtra / @Nikita Mishra



World Wetlands Day 2026: Advancing the Role of Traditional Knowledge in Wetland Conservation

Wetlands International South Asia celebrated World Wetlands Day on 2 February 2026 with a public event in New Delhi. The event was aligned with the World Wetlands Day global theme ‘Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage’. The theme spotlighted the timeless role of traditional knowledge in sustaining wetland ecosystems and preserving cultural identity.

Dr Balakrishna Pisupati (Country Head, UN Environment Programme India) was the chief guest of the event. In his keynote address, Dr Pisupati highlighted the deep interlinkages between wetlands, culture, livelihoods, and human well-being. He emphasised the need to integrate traditional knowledge with modern science to strengthen climate resilience and called for greater use of policy instruments such as the Biological Diversity Act and People’s Biodiversity Registers.

The event included a panel discussion on strengthening wetland governance in India. The panellists included Dr Asad Rahmani and Dr Ajit Pattnaik (Founder-members of WISA Society), Dr PN Vasanti (Director General, CMS Vatavaran), and Prof CK Varshney (nominated member of WISA Society). The discussion underscored key challenges, including fragmented governance, weak enforcement, and limited public awareness, while advocating for participatory, science-based, and culturally informed approaches.

Over 60 participants from government, academia, civil society, the media, and students attended the event at the India International Centre in New Delhi.

Sarovar–The newsletter of Wetlands International South Asia

The Society’s newsletter, Sarovar, was introduced in 2012 to generate awareness and present diverse perspectives on seminal issues related to wetlands conservation in South Asia. The tenth



Panellists with a special memento marking the theme of World Wetlands Day. The mementoes’ main motif depicts wetlands in Pattachitra, a heritage folk art of Odisha



Release of Sarovar Newsletter at the World Wetlands Day event



volume of the newsletter on the theme of 'Wetlands Regulation' was published on World Wetlands Day. The volume contains contributions on the theme from India, the

United States, China, and Indonesia and is available at <https://south-asia.wetlands.org/newsletter-series-sarovar/>

An editorial board, with Dr Sidharth Kaul as the Chief Editor, Prof KV Jayakumar, Dr Lalitha Vijayan, Prof JK Garg, Dr Ajit Patnaik as members, and Dr Ritesh Kumar as Managing Editor, was constituted during the year. The periodical was also registered under the Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023 (Registration Number (PRGI No. DLENG/26/A2443)).

Engaging with students and youth on wetlands conservation

As part of its continued efforts to engage with students and youth on wetlands conservation, Wetlands International South Asia has set up a Wetlands Learning

Centre at Government High School, Korzok (Puga), near the Tsomoriri Wetland in Ladakh, in November 2025. Located in one of India's highest inhabited regions, the centre aims to foster participatory management and stewardship of the high-altitude Tsomoriri wetland ecosystem through active student involvement.

The school has limited access to environmental education resources. The students largely come from families living in close proximity to the Tsomoriri wetland, and have grown up with an intimate, lived understanding of its landscape. The Centre aims to complement and strengthen this local knowledge with technical and scientific understanding, equipping the youth with tools and frameworks to better articulate for the ecosystem they have always known.

A two-day capacity-building workshop was held on November 3–4, 2025, engaging 53 students and 19 teachers. Students participated in an interactive workshop with hands-on activities, including water quality testing during a field visit to Tsomoriri, an interactive quiz, and creative learning exercises.

Wetlands International South Asia was part of the Indian delegation at the inaugural conference of the Asia Wetland School Network (AWSN) held from



Interactive sessions and activities being held to provide hands-on, immersive learning experience for the students



The second meeting of the steering committee of the Asia Wetland School Network was held in Haikou, China



Apoorva Thapa appointed as India's Youth Focal Point to the Ramsar Convention

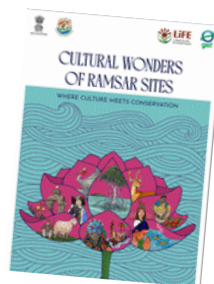
At COP14, the Ramsar Convention established an official Ramsar Youth Focal Point to increase youth participation and representation in wetland governance.

Ms Apoorva Thapa (Technical Officer-Hindu Kush Himalayas) was appointed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change as India's Youth Focal Point for the Ramsar Convention for 2023–25. She was made responsible for serving as the focal point for youth inclusion in the programmes of the Ramsar Convention, building a network of youth in the country to support wetlands conservation initiatives, and serving as an active spokesperson for youth on matters related to wetlands conservation. Ms Thapa was one of the key members of the team drafting the youth statement for the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which met in July 2025 in Zimbabwe. A draft resolution on youth empowerment and integration, to be implemented in the coming years, was also introduced and adopted by the Ramsar Convention at COP15.

TEAM • Sarthak Danda • Suchita Awasthi • Dayadra Mandal • Aditi Patial • Apoorva Thapa • Arif Ahmad

December 10 to 12, 2025, in Haikou City, China. The conference aimed to share information and experience on wetland school activities in Asia; discuss students' and teachers' expectations for the network to benefit members; and identify future network activities to support the implementation of Resolution XIV.11 in Asia. Ms Suchita Awasthi showcased the organisation's youth engagement initiatives at the conference. Ms Awasthi also participated in the 2nd Meeting of the Steering Committee of the AWSN held during the conference on December 11, 2025. The steering committee agreed to develop guidance, informational materials, and capacity-building initiatives to support the development and operationalisation of the Asia Wetland School Network.

A compilation on the cultural significance of Ramsar Sites



Under the aegis of the GEF-funded Integrated Management of Wetland Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services project, Wetlands International South Asia developed a compilation on the cultural values associated with India's Ramsar Sites.

The document showcases cultural practices, community traditions, festivals, folklore, art, legends, historical significance, and mythological narratives associated with the 98 sites designated as of February 2026. The publication was released by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change at the national World Wetlands Day event 2026, held at Asola Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary, Delhi and is available at <https://indianwetlands.in/wp-content/uploads/library/ramsar-cultural-wonders-98-sites.pdf>

Forest Guards from the Wildlife Protection Department, Ladakh, participate in a field-based training at Gupuks Pond / @Apoorva Thapa





Governance

*Asian Green Bee-eater at Dhamapur Lake,
Maharashtra / @Nikita Mishra*

Wetlands International South Asia is governed under a three-tier structure

The General Body sets the strategic direction and policies of the organisation, whereas management's responsibilities are vested in the Governing Body. The Office Bearers, comprising the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, oversee the implementation of decisions and programme operations. The Director, appointed by the Governing Body, serves as the principal institutional representative of Wetlands International South Asia and is responsible for implementing the organisation's strategy and activities.

Annual General Body Meeting

The 18th Annual Meeting of the General Body was held on September 19, 2025, at the NSIC Conference Room in New Delhi. The meeting was attended by 21 members. The annual report and audited financial statements for the period April 2024–March 2025 were adopted at the meeting. The General Body also approved amendments to Rule 13.9 regarding the filling of vacant positions in the Governing Body and Rules 27.2 and 27.5 regarding amendments to Rules and Regulations.

Meetings of the Governing Body

The 30th and the 31st meetings of the Governing Body were held during the year. At the 30th meeting, held on April 29, 2025, the Governing Body considered the Annual Plan for the year and approved the same with the recommendation for including clear milestones and monitoring mechanisms. M/s S. Sahoo & Co. were appointed as the statutory auditor for the financial year 2024–25. Proposals for amendments to Rules and Regulations to account for vacancies created by resignation, death, disability, and incapacitation were considered.

The 31st meeting of the Governing Body was held at Imphal, Manipur, on September 2, 2025. The draft Annual Report for 2024–25 and draft audited statements were considered. The members also considered proposals for enhancing the implementation of the membership strategy. The Governing Body also held meetings with officials of the Loktak Development Authority and the Forest Department, Government of Manipur, and discussed ways to make the organisation's contributions to wetlands conservation more effective.



The 18th Annual General Body Meeting being held at the NSIC Conference Room, New Delhi



The Governing Body held its 31st meeting at Imphal, Manipur

Meetings of Office Bearers

The Office Bearers met four times between April 2025 and March 2026 to assess the implementation of decisions made in various Society meetings, review technical programs, and prepare agendas for the Governing Body and General Body meetings. Dr Sidharth Kaul, President, met Mr Jan Karel Mak, Chairman, Supervisory Council of Wetlands International, on March 31, 2025, wherein the modalities for strengthening the relationship between the Supervisory Council and the Boards of Wetlands International network offices were discussed. In the meeting of September 1, 2025, the Officer Bearers considered the draft Wetlands International Strategic Intent 2026–35. The process to develop a succession plan for key positions in the organisation was initiated. In the meeting of November 25, 2025, the Office Bearers approved the appointment of the Internal Complaints Committee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The terms of reference of working groups on wetlands inventory, management of small wetlands, and wetlands wise use were also approved. In the meeting held on March 10, 2026, the Office Bearers reviewed the funding proposals for 2026–27. The screening committee to suggest potential members for the Governing Body and the position of President was constituted.

New General Body Members

The Wetlands International South Asia Society has five membership categories. While the founder members category only includes the original signatories of the Society's Memorandum of Association, the nominated members are only by invitation. During the year, the total membership in the Society increased from 59 to 79 members.

Membership Category	Total members as of 31 March 2025	Total members as of 31 March 2026
Founder members	12	12
Nominated members	13	13
General members	31	46
Institutional members	1	1
Student members	2	7

Donors, Partners and Collaborators

Donors

Department of Environment,
Forest and Climate Change, Bihar

GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit)

MoEFCC-GEF-UNEP

Perspective Climate Group (PCG)

Rainmatter Foundation

Tata Motors Limited

United Nations Development
Programme (UNDP)

Wetlands International Global
Office, The Netherlands

Partners and Collaborators

Wetlands Division, MoEFCC

National Mission for Clean Ganga,
Ministry of Jal Shakti

Agencies of United Nation

UN Development Programme

UN Environment Programme

Wetland Authorities

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar,
Chhattisgarh, Chilika, East Kolkata
Wetlands, Haryana, Himachal
Pradesh, Kerala, Ladakh, Loktak,
Madhya Pradesh, NCT of Delhi,
Punjab, Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh,
Wular

NGOs and NGO Consortia

WWF India, SEEDS India, Asian
Development Research Institute,
Aranyak, Progressive Research
Organization for Welfare (PROW),
NetCoast, Action for Protection of
Wild Animals (APOWA), India NbS
Forum, India Water Partnership,
Srushti Conservation Foundation

Knowledge and Research Organisations

CWRDM, DPS Faridabad, GEER
Foundation, Harihar Dev Bidyapeeth
(Odisha), Kumbalathu Sankupillai
Memorial Devaswom Board College,
National Centre for Sustainable
Coastal Management, Salim Ali
Centre for Ornithology and Natural
History (SACON), World Resource
Institute

State Forest Departments

Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana,
Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and
Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Uttar
Pradesh

International Organisations

GIZ, Perspectives Climate Group

Private Sector Platforms

Confederation of Indian Industry
India Business & Biodiversity
Initiative by MoEFCC

India Wetland Coalition

Capacity Building and Training Institutes

National Institute of Disaster
Management and National
Institute of Rural Development and
Panchayati Raj

State of Indian Birds Coalition

Ashoka Trust for Research in
Ecology and the Environment, BNHS
Conservation Education Centre,
Foundation for Ecological Security,
Indian Institute of Science (IISc),
National Biodiversity Authority,
National Centre for Biological
Sciences, Nature Conservation
Foundation, SACON, Wildlife
Institute of India, Wildlife Trust of
India, WWF India, Zoological Survey
of India

Asian Waterbird Census Network

AERO, Bird Count India, BNHS,
Deccan Birders, Mandar Nature's
Club, National Biodiversity Authority,
Neo Foundation, Wild Orissa



Accounts and Audit Report

Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat / @Anil Fartiyal

Report on the Financial Statements

Opinion

1. We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Wetlands International South Asia Society (PAN: AAATW1125E), which comprise the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2026, the Income and Expenditure Account, Receipts & Payment Account for the year then ended, and significant accounting policies and notes to the financial statements.
2. In our opinion and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, the aforesaid financial statements give the information required by the Act in the manner so required and comply, in all material respects, with the conditions laid down in the Scheme for the management and administration of the society and the rules made thereunder, to the extent relevant and applicable, and give a true and fair view in conformity with the accounting principles generally accepted in India, of the state of affairs of the Society as at 31 March 2026, and its deficit for the year ended on that date

Basis of Opinion

3. We conducted our audit in accordance with the Standards on Auditing (SAs). Our responsibilities under those Standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Society in accordance with the Code of Ethics issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India ('ICAI') and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the Code of Ethics. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Management for the Financial Statements

4. The management is responsible for the preparation of these financial statements that give a true and fair view of the financial position and

financial performance of the society in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in India. This responsibility also includes maintenance of adequate accounting records in accordance with the provisions of the Act for safeguarding of the assets of the society and for preventing and detecting frauds and other irregularities; selection and application of appropriate accounting policies; making judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and design, implementation and maintenance of adequate internal financial controls, that were operating effectively for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the accounting records, relevant to the preparation and presentation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

5. In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the society's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the society or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

6. Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Standards on Auditing will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.
7. As part of an audit in accordance with Standards on Auditing, we exercise professional judgment and maintain

professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence, that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of society's use of the going concern

basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the society's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the society to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
8. We communicate with the management regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing

of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Other Matter

9. We have also issued our audit report as per Form No. 10B pursuant to the requirements of section 12A(1)(b) of the Income-tax Act, 1961, on the financial statements prepared by the management as required by the provisions of the Income-Tax Act, 1961 covering the same period as these accompanying financial statements.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

10. As required under other regulatory requirements, we report as under for the year ended 31 March 2026:
- a. Society has maintained its books of accounts in electronic mode. The books of accounts are updated and maintained by the finance department of the society on regular basis. The books of accounts are maintained in Delhi. In our opinion and accordingly information provided to us,



- proper books of accounts are maintained by the society and the same is maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the rules made thereunder.
- b. Receipts and disbursements are properly and correctly shown in the accounts;
 - c. The cash balance, vouchers, bank book etc. are in custody of Finance Department and the same are in agreement with Books of account on the date of our audit.
 - d. All books, deeds, accounts, vouchers or other documents or records required by us were produced for audit;
 - e. The Director and Finance Department of the society has furnished all information required for audit;
 - f. In our opinion and according to the information provided to us, no property or funds of the society were applied for any object or purpose other than the object or purpose of the society;
 - g. Society has invested its surplus as per the provisions of section 11(5) of the Income Tax Act.
 - h. In our opinion and according to the information provided to us, no cases of irregular, illegal or improper expenditure or failure or omission to recover moneys or other property belonging to the public trust or of loss, or waste of moneys or other property thereof, and whether such expenditure, failure, omission, loss or waste was caused in consequence of breach of trust or misapplication or any other misconduct on the part of the governing board or any other person while in the management of the society were identified;
 - i. As per the Scheme for the management and administration of the Society, the management of the society is entrusted to “Office Bearers”. During the year under review, Society has 4 number of members as Office Bearers. The same is in accordance to the Scheme for the management and administration of the Society;
 - j. In our opinion and according to the information provided to us, no governing board member has any interest in the investment of the Society;
 - k. In our opinion and according to the information provided to us, no material irregularities were pointed out in the books of accounts of previous year.



Balance Sheet

(Amount in INR)

PARTICULARS		Note	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
I SOURCES OF FUNDS				
1	NPO Funds	3		
(a)	Capital Fund		1,410,796	1,410,796
(b)	General Fund		109,216,476	119,772,249
			110,627,272	121,183,045
2	Non-current liabilities			
(a)	Long-term borrowings		-	-
(b)	Other long-term liabilities		-	-
(c)	Long-term provisions		-	-
			-	-
3	Current liabilities			
(a)	Short-term borrowings		-	-
(b)	Other current liabilities	4	6,345,082	5,740,754
(c)	Short-term provisions		-	-
			6,345,082	5,740,754
TOTAL			116,972,353	126,923,798

II APPLICATION OF FUNDS				
1	Non-current assets			
(a)	Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible assets	5		
	(i) Property, Plant and Equipment		8,811,898	7,918,994
	(ii) Intangible assets			
	(iii) Capital work in progress			
	(iv) Intangible asset under development			
(b)	Non-current investments	6	200,000	200,000
(c)	Long Term Loans and Advances		-	-
(d)	Other non-current assets	7	1,812,360	1,543,966
			10,824,258	9,662,960
2	Current assets			
(a)	Current investments	8	52,777,044	58,180,306
(b)	Inventories		-	-
(c)	Project Receivables	9	39,674,950	39,364,449
(d)	Cash and bank balances	10	8,110,773	13,370,202
(e)	Short Term Loans and Advances	11	3,021,201	2,936,303
(f)	Other current assets	12	2,564,127	3,409,578
			106,148,095	117,260,838
TOTAL			116,972,353	126,923,798

(Signed in original)

Dr Sidharth Kaul
President

Pijush Sinha
Treasurer

Dr Ritesh Kumar
Director

ML Khan
Admin & Finance
Officer

Income and Expenditure

(Amount in INR)

PARTICULARS		Note	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
I	Income			
(a)	Revenue from Projects	13	54,739,064	56,475,849
(b)	Other Income	14	6,378,185	5,269,731
II	TOTAL		61,117,249	61,745,579
III	Expenses			
(a)	Expenditure on Objects of Organization-Projects Expenses	15	26,438,397	26,005,959
(b)	Donations/Contributions Paid-Amount Sub Grant		-	-
(c)	Employee Benefits Expense	16	34,928,947	34,336,776
(d)	Admin Expenditures	17	8,421,350	7,958,521
(e)	Depreciation and amortization expense	18	1,884,329	1,883,847
	TOTAL		71,673,022	70,185,103
IV	Excess of Income over Expenditure before exceptional and extraordinary items (III- IV)		-10,555,773	-8,439,524
V	Exceptional items		-	-
VI	Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year before extraordinary items (V-VI)		-10,555,773	-8,439,524
VII	Extraordinary Items		-	-
VIII	Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year (VII-VIII)		-10,555,773	-8,439,524
Appropriations Transfer to Funds:				
	Balance transferred to General Fund		-10,555,773	-8,439,524

(Signed in original)

Dr Sidharth Kaul
PresidentPijush Sinha
TreasurerDr Ritesh Kumar
DirectorML Khan
Admin & Finance
Officer



Outlook 2026–27

During 2026–27, we will work for the following results in six thematic areas, namely, Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands, Rejuvenating Wetlands for Water Security, Nurturing Wetland Livelihoods, Wetlands as Nature-based Solution for Disaster Risk Reduction, Conserving Wetlands Biodiversity, And Safeguarding Wetland Carbon:



Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands

We aim to formulate integrated management plans of five Ramsar Sites (spanning 0.1 million ha) and initiate implementation of management plans for 10 Ramsar Sites. Additionally, our goal is to complete management effectiveness evaluations for 100% of the Ramsar Sites. To strengthen the capacities of stakeholders, training workshops will be conducted for State and district-level functionaries in at least 10 States, and an online course on integrated management will be developed and launched. We will also publish a compendium of good practices on wetland conservation.



Rejuvenating Wetlands for Water Security

We will support the implementation of management actions in prioritised floodplain wetlands of River Ganga in Bulandshahr, Prayagraj, and Ballia in Uttar Pradesh, Dimna Lake in Jharkhand, Nathmalpur in Bihar, Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary in New Delhi, and the floodplains wetlands of River Yamuna in Delhi. To strengthen the knowledge base, we will publish a guidebook on the science and practice of conserving wetlands for water security, a policy brief on the conservation and management of floodplain wetlands, and a report on the conservation status of small wetlands. We will also organise capacity-development workshop for the district administration to enhance water security through wetlands management in at least two districts.



Wetlands as Nature-Based Solutions For DRR

We will support the integration of wetlands conservation and restoration within the framework of the DDMP of the five districts. We will also provide support for wetlands conservation and rejuvenation within the framework of the Ganjam (Odisha) DDMP. We will initiate mangrove restoration in the Gulf of Khambhat and the Chanch District of Gujarat. Additionally, we will support the restoration of canals, ponds, and mangroves in Bangladesh.



Nurturing Wetlands Livelihoods

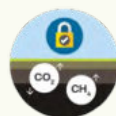
For the Brahmaputra floodplains of Assam, we will support the integration of sustainable livelihood options (sustainable tourism, fisheries, and wetland-based micro-enterprises) into wetland management. We will also publish a training module for PRIs and wetland managers on integrated wetland management and sustainable livelihoods. A compendium of case studies on sustainable wetland tourism, fisheries, and wetland-based micro-enterprises will also be published.



Conserving Wetland Biodiversity

We will initiate management interventions in 75 prioritised wetlands around Tata Motors production facilities in Pune, Sanand, Lucknow, and Jamshedpur. The draft report on the State of Indian Wetlands will be finalised after incorporating the review from the expert committee. We will publish an assessment protocol for the identification of High Conservation Value wetlands in a landscape and Standard Operating Procedures for Corporates on Wetlands

conservation and wise use. A critical site network map and analysis for five target CAF species will also be concluded. During the year, we will develop and publish the decadal synthesis report for 2016–2025.



Safeguarding Wetland Carbon

During the year we will initiate actions for the conservation of peatlands in Chandertal (Himachal Pradesh), Khechopalri (Sikkim), Tsokar (Ladakh), and Mirgund/Hokersar (Jammu and Kashmir). We will publish an inventory of peatlands in the Indian Himalayan Region. A report on the role of wetlands and a roadmap for integrating wetlands conservation into climate change mitigation and adaptation will also be concluded. The meeting of the peatland coalition to advance work and partnerships in peatland conservation is also envisaged.



Communications and Outreach

We will continue our engagements with the students through educational programmes designed for middle and high school students, as well as higher education institutions. Knowledge and outreach products will be developed to inspire young minds about wetland conservation.

Continuing the wetlands monograph series, initiated in 2021 to serve as a resource for policy planners, academics and other stakeholders in undertaking actions for wetlands conservation, monographs for Vembanad Kol and Sathamkotta (Kerala), Kabartal (Bihar), Wular (Jammu & Kashmir), and Chandertal (Himachal Pradesh) will be published. South Asia Conference on Wetlands for Sustainable Futures will be organised in collaboration with the Living Waters Museum at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune.

We will also continue to provide handholding support to wetland authorities with which Wetlands International South Asia has a long-standing association. Through wetlands authorities and other forums, we will continue to engage with the state governments by raising relevant issues, also enabling state governments to take actions for effective regulation and management.



Outlook

2026 – 2027



Think

Providing science-base and tools for conservation

Nurturing Wetlands Livelihoods

130 wetlands
5,592 ha

Baseline assessment of livelihoods in floodplain districts of River Brahmaputra

Safeguarding Wetland Carbon

1,70,000 ha

Inventorising peatlands in the Indian Himalayan Region



Act

Work in specific sites delivering on-ground actions

Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands

20 Ramsar Site
5,00,000 ha

- Design management plans of 5 Ramsar Sites
- Implement management interventions at 10 Ramsar Sites
- Support designation of 5 new Ramsar Sites

Rejuvenating Wetlands for Water Security and DRR

183 wetlands
14,515.16 ha

Support implementation of management actions in prioritised floodplain wetlands of River Ganga, Yamuna, and Brahmaputra

Wetlands as Nature-based Solution for Disaster Risk Reduction

6 wetlands
830 ha

- Provide support for canal/pond and mangrove restoration in Bangladesh
- Initiate mangrove restoration in the Gulf of Khambhat and Chanch District of Gujarat

Nurturing Wetlands Livelihoods

8 wetlands
7,665 ha

Initiate wetlands conservation and sustainable livelihoods interventions in floodplain districts of Assam

Safeguarding Wetland Carbon

4 wetlands
10,000 ha

Initiate work on conserving peatlands of Chandertal (Himachal Pradesh), Khechopalri (Sikkim), Tsokar (Ladakh), and Mirgund/Hokersar (Jammu and Kashmir)



Inspire

Inspire key actors and stakeholders to deliver results sustainably

Strengthening Integrated Management of Wetlands

100 Ramsar Sites
13,87.612 ha

Baseline Management effectiveness scores established for 100% Ramsar Sites

Our Team

DIRECTOR & DEPUTY DIRECTOR



Dr Ritesh Kumar
Director



Suchita Awasthi
Deputy Director

PROGRAMME HEADS & SENIOR TECHNICAL OFFICERS



Dr Asghar Nawab
Programme Head /
AQUATIC ECOLOGY



Dhruv Verma
Programme Head /
CARBON AND LANDSCAPES



Sridhar A
Senior Technical Officer /
COASTS AND DELTAS



Arghya Chakrabarty
Senior Technical
Officer / BIODIVERSITY

TECHNICAL OFFICERS



Kamal Dalakoti
Technical Officer / GIS
AND REMOTE SENSING



Kalpna Ambastha
Technical Officer /
SUSTAINABLE
LIVELIHOODS



Ravi Prakash
Technical Officer /
WETLANDS SPECIALIST



Apoorva Thapa
Technical Officer /
HIMALAYAS



Umang Agnihotri
Technical Officer /
WETLANDS SPECIALIST



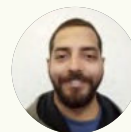
Preethi Vasudevan
Technical Officer / WATER
MANAGEMENT



Dayadra Mandal
Technical Officer / WATER
MANAGEMENT



Shivani Negi
Technical Officer / GIS
AND REMOTE SENSING



Sarthak Danda
Communications
Officer

JUNIOR TECHNICAL OFFICERS & PROGRAMME ASSOCIATES



Nikita Mishra
Junior Technical Officer
/ KNOWLEDGE BASE
DEVELOPMENT



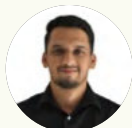
Dakshata Gaikwad
Junior Technical Officer /
BIODIVERSITY



Anil Fartiyal
Junior Technical
Officer / BIODIVERSITY



Rani Kumari
Junior Technical Officer /
WATER MANAGEMENT



Divyanshu Pawar
Junior Technical Officer /
WATER MANAGEMENT



Nivedhitha MP
Programme Associate



Arif Ahmad
Programme Associate /
HIMALAYAS



Aditi Patial
Programme Associate /
IMWBES



Ritish Ninan Alex
Programme Associate /
IMWBES

OPERATIONS AND FINANCE



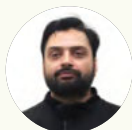
Sauryajit Chaudhuri
Manager / OPERATIONS
AND PARTNERSHIPS



ML Khan
Administration and
Finance Officer



Avinash Kumar Saroj
Accountant



Yogendra Kumar
Accountant



Rakesh Verma
Office Support Staff



Mahender Kumar
Office Assistant



Kamal
Office Assistant

OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF

Publications

Wetlands International South Asia Library

Total records as of May 31, 2026

4,480

Publications received during 2026

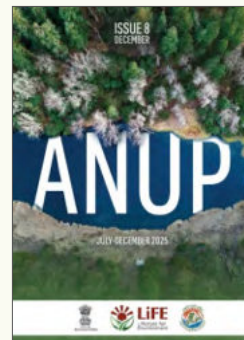
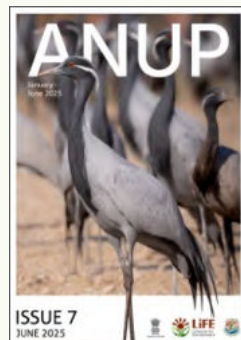
200

NEWSLETTER



Sarovar, Volume X

EXTERNAL PUBLICATION

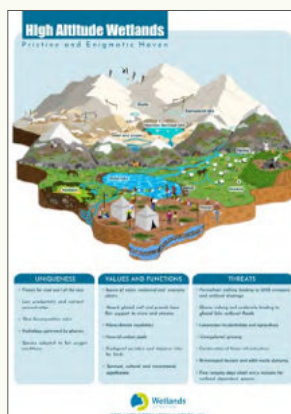


Issue 7 and 8 of the Newsletter of the Wetlands Division of MoEFCC, Anup

POSTER

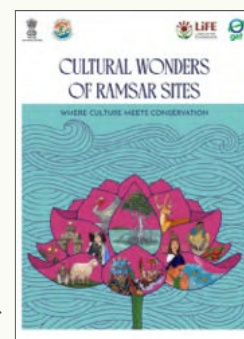


Integrated Wetland Management for Wise Use Poster

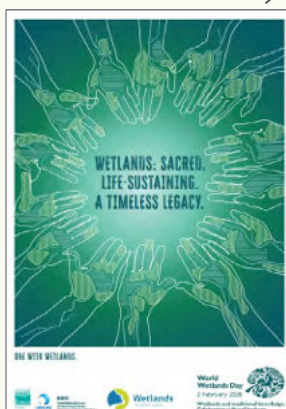


High-Altitude Wetland Poster

BOOK



Cultural Wonders of Ramsar Sites of India



World Wetlands Day 2026 Theme
Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge:
Celebrating Cultural Heritage



IN THE NEWS / World Wetlands Day Event 2026



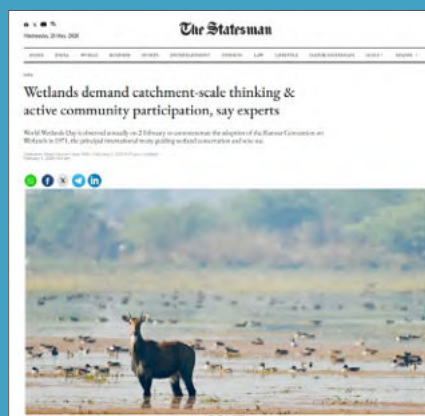
Wetlands loss weakening Delhi's flood resilience, The Week, February 2, 2026



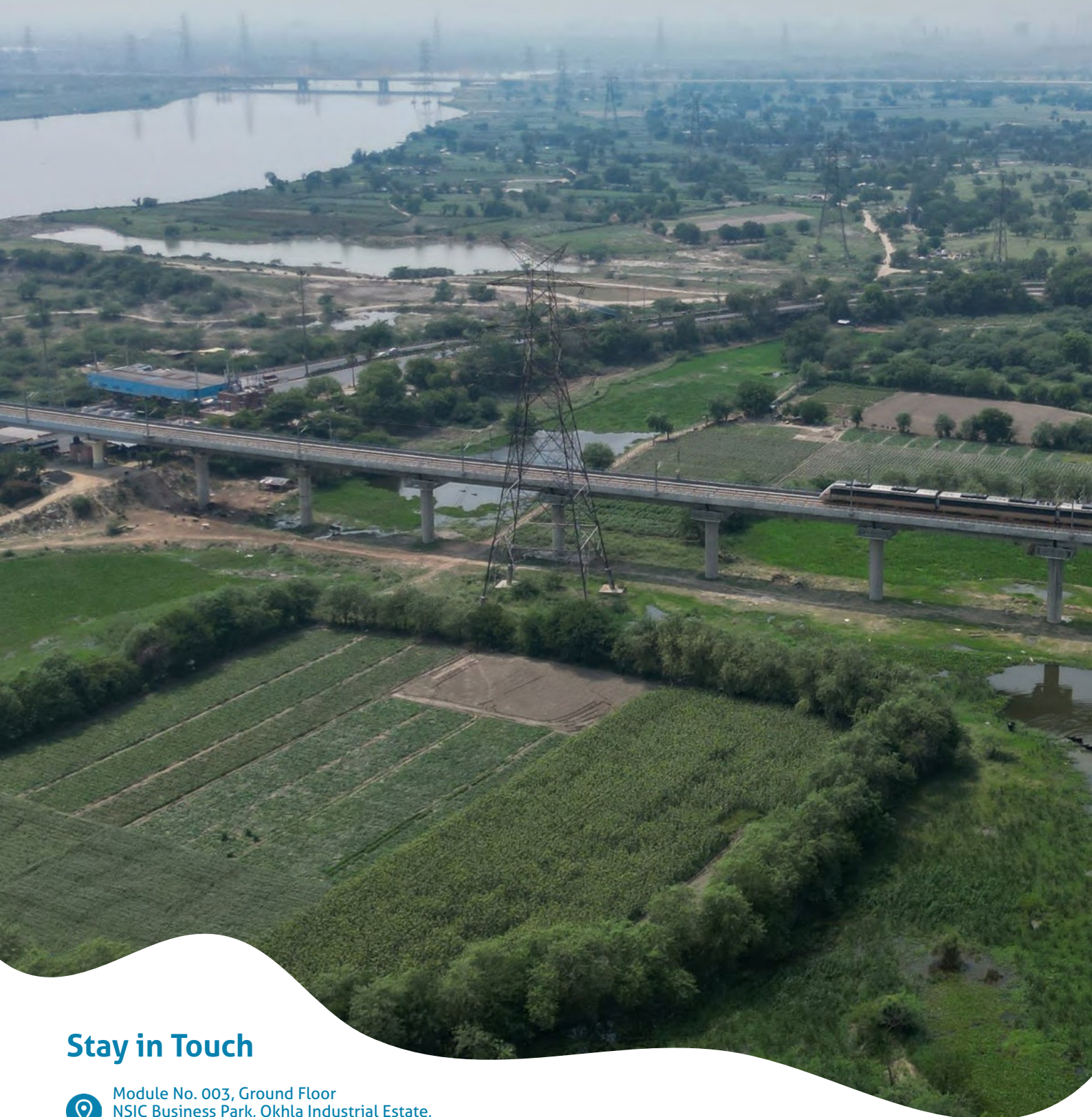
Wetlands loss weakening Delhi's flood resilience, PTI, February 2, 2026



World Wetlands Day 2026: Guardians of the marsh: Honoring ancestral wisdom in the fight for our wetlands, Times of India, February 3, 2026



Wetlands demand catchment-scale thinking and active community participation, says experts, The Statesman, February 4, 2026



Stay in Touch



Module No. 003, Ground Floor
NSIC Business Park, Okhla Industrial Estate,
New Delhi-110020, India



wi.southasia@wi-sa.org



<https://south-asia.wetlands.org/>



@wetlandsint_sa



@WetlandsInt_SA



Wetlands International



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