Environment & Ecology · GS - III

What is wetland? Explain the Ramsar concept of ‘wise use’ in the context of wetland conservation. Cite two examples of Ramsar sites from India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Wetland definition; Ramsar Convention; wise use principle; ecological character; sustainable livelihoods; ecosystem services; Indian Ramsar sites

Model Answer

Introduction

Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that may be static or flowing, fresh, brackish or saline. They include certain coastal marine waters.

Ramsar Concept of ‘Wise Use’

Under the Ramsar Convention, wise use means maintaining the ecological character of wetlands through ecosystem-based approaches within the context of sustainable development.

Key Elements

1. **Ecological protection:** Conserve wetland hydrology, biodiversity and natural habitats.
2. **Sustainable livelihoods:** Allow compatible activities such as traditional fishing and controlled harvesting.
3. **Integrated management:** Coordinate wetland protection with river-basin planning, agriculture and urban development.
4. **Community participation:** Involve local communities in conservation and decision-making.
5. **Monitoring:** Assess water quality, invasive species, land-use changes and ecological health.

Examples from India

- **Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan:** An important wetland supporting resident and migratory birds.
- **Chilika Lake, Odisha:** A brackish-water lagoon supporting fisheries, migratory birds and rich biodiversity.

Conclusion

Wise use does not mean excluding all human activity. It means maintaining wetland ecological functions while permitting sustainable uses that do not undermine their long-term health.

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