

# **PUNJAB WETLANDS POLICY-2012**

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**PUNJAB WILDLIFE & PARKS  
DEPARTMENT**

## **MESSAGE FROM CHIEF MINISTER, PUNJAB**

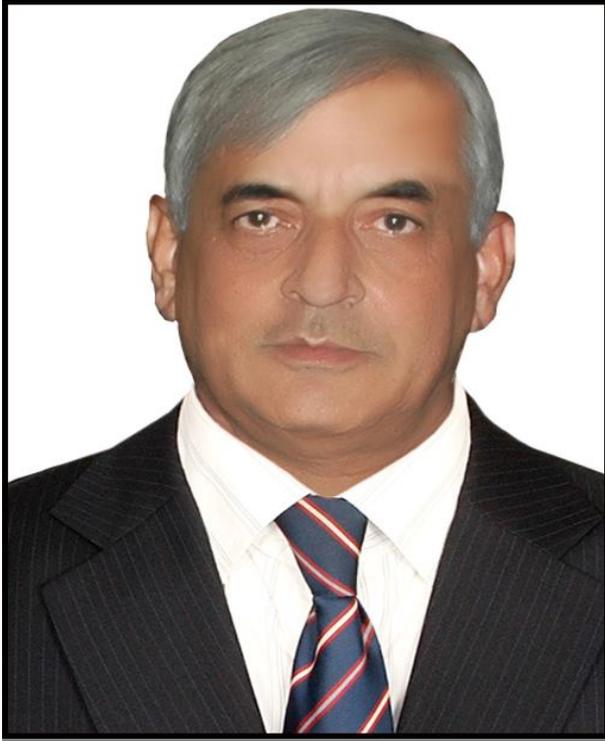


Wetlands are important aquatic eco systems and support diversified flora and fauna. The importance of wetland of Punjab has been increased manifold due to connection with Indus flyway / Green route, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest migratory route of the world. Wildlife has been a neglected sector in the past. Resultantly several wildlife species particularly the aquatic species have become endangered in a last couple of years. To check this alarming situation and develop wetland resources in a sustainable way, the Government of the Punjab intends to take all possible measures to protect wetlands of the province in order to save our national heritage for the future generations.

I would urge the primary stake holders to support this national cause and join hands with the Wildlife Department for the protection, preservation and conservation of the natural and national heritage.

**CHIEF MINISTER PUNJAB**

## PREFACE



Wildlife is an important natural resource and an integral part of our environment. With the passage of time Wildlife resources are under multi dimension pressure. Human impacts, such as ruthless hunting and environment degradation have resulted in deterioration of Wildlife resources and status of important wildlife species is not satisfactory. A few species are endangered and status of many other species is showing declining trend. Once a species is extinct, it cannot be duplicated and becomes a part of history.

In present scenario it has become inevitable to conserve biodiversity and join hands with “Nature Conservation Agencies” for the cause of wildlife conservation and develop wildlife resources in a sustainable way. Such efforts will ensure inheritance of wildlife owned natural beauty and means of subsistence to future generations.

Government has framed Wetland Strategy 2012-16 which is a step forward in the right direction. Public participation is the hallmark of this policy. New initiatives are being taken to promote public love for wildlife through sharing wildlife resources. This would generate public participation and invoke interest of public in wildlife at large.

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## INTRODUCTION:



*(Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah)*

Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department ensures Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management of Wildlife resources in the Punjab Province. The Department has a checkered history from 1934 – 1973. The Department started functioning in 1934 as Game Department and in 1973 it was renamed as Punjab Wildlife & Parks Department. Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation & Management) Act was promulgated in 1974, which has been amended upto 2007.

The Department visualized that for effective enforcement of Wildlife Act and strengthen ongoing management activities, a policy document is mandatory. Accordingly, Wetland Conservation Policy 2012-16 has been framed for the conservation of Wetland Resources in Punjab. The salient features of the Policy are as under:

# 1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

## i. Concept Of Wetlands

### Ramsar Concept of Wetland

Areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water which is static, flowing, fresh brackish or salt, including areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters.

## ii. Ramsar Mission

The convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

## iii. The Wise Use Concept

At the centre of the Ramsar philosophy, is the "wise use" concept. The wise use of wetlands is defined as "the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development". "Wise use" therefore has at its heart the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources, for the benefit of humankind.

# 2. IMPORTANCE OF WETLAND

Generally, wetlands are important "Ecological Complexes" supporting diversified flora and fauna. Resident & migratory wildlife species are associated with these wetlands, serving as potential gene pool reservoirs. Keeping in view the importance and status of critically endangered species associated with wetlands, variety of these wetlands have been assigned protective status and have been declared as Wildlife sanctuaries and Game Reserves under section 16 & 18 of Punjab Wildlife Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management Act, 1974 amended upto 2007 to ensure better protection and promotion of wildlife. Further under the obligations of international Conventions, particularly the 'Ramsar Convention' few wetlands have been designated as Ramsar Sites. Presently, all the efforts of the Department are oriented for sustainable conservation of wetlands.

i. **BIODIVERSITY OF WETLANDS**

a) **Plants**

Kikar (*Acacia spp*), Mesquite (*Prosopis spp*), Safida (*Eucalyptus spp*), Shisham (*Dalbergia spp*), Typha (*Typha aungustifolia*), Kana (*Saccharum murja*), Kai (*Saccharum spontaneum*), Nara (*Arundo spp*), Lotus and diversified herbs and grasses.

b) **Animals / Birds**

b(i). **Resident Animal Species**

Indus Dolphin (*platanista minor*) Hog deer (*Axis porcinus*), Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Fishing Cat (*Felis vivericula*), Jungle Cat (*Felis bengalensis*), Jackal (*Canis aureus*), Fox (*Vulpus vulpus*), Porcupine (*Hystrix indica*), Wild boar (*Sus scrufa*), Mongoos (*Herpestis spp*), Squirrel (*Funambulus pennantai*), Rats & nice, Snakes & Lizards.

b(ii). **Resident Bird Species:**

Pheasant tailed jacana, Gargany, Lesser whistling teal, Marbled teal, Cormorants, Egrets, Herons, Terns, Gulls, Grebes, Lapwings, Sand pipers, Stints, Shanks, Plovers, Curlews, Avocits, Harrirs Cestrils, Merlins, Kites, Hawks, Eagles, Owls, Doves, Parakeets, Cuckoos, Partridges, Quails, Wood packers, King fishers, Wagtails, Mynas, Bee-eatens, Sparrows, Crows.

b(iii). **Migratory Bird Species:**

Coot, Mallard, Common Pochard, Red-crested pochard, Shovellor, Gadwal, Pintail, Tufted duck, White eyed pochard, Common teal, Flamingos, Spoon bill, Storks, Cranes, Ruddy Shelduck, Common Shelduck and Raptors.

### **3. PRESENT STATUS OF WETLANDS IN PUNJAB**

Many prevailing threats have affected the viability of wetlands. Water and land use practices, leasing of pond areas, over-exploitation of wetland resources, change in water quality, toxicity and illegal hunting / poaching are major **limiting factors** causing harms to wetlands. The White head duck, is now extinct, flamingoes are near extinction and status of many local & migrant species is highly critical. The limiting factors need to be addressed properly, so that withered wetlands continue to serve as important biological resources for present & future generations.

#### **3(i). ON-GOING ACTIVITIES**

- Regular monitoring of wetlands for protection and sustainable development.
- Mid-winter waterfowl courts in collaboration with IWRB, England.
- Population trend and fluctuations.
- Migratory routes and barriers.
- Limnological studies and drought concerns.
- Siltation and Eutrophication.
- Direct and Indirect threats (Livestock grazing & removal of vegetation).
- Heavy metal toxicity and other effluents.
- Cancellation of leasing rights.
- Vacation from illegal occupants.
- Publicity & awareness.

#### **3(ii). COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL**

The wetlands are in service of mankind with considerable commercial potential. The wetlands provides: -

- Sponges for water storage.
- Subsistence for local inhabitants.
- Raw material for cottage industries i.e. Typhar, Reed, Kana, Kai, Lotus etc.
- Medicinal plants.
- Irrigation water
- Fishing & angling.
- Livestock grazing and fodder.
- Potential Reservoirs for sport hunting.
- Recreation through boating, wildlife watching.

## 4. COMPONENTS OF WETLAND POLICY

- i. WHERE WE ARE?
- ii. WHERE WE SHOULD BE?
- iii. HOW?

### 4(i). WHERE WE ARE?

The present wetland resources of the Province are given below:

| <b>Important Wetlands of Punjab</b>                |  |                          |                                   |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>A- Northern Zone Wetland Biological Complex</b> |  |                          |                                   |
| <b>Sr. No.</b>                                     | <b>Name of Wetland</b>   | <b>Status</b>            | <b>Area</b>                       |
| i.   | Chashma Barrage  | Wildlife Sanctuary       | 81750                             |
| ii   | Jinnah Barrage   | -                        | 3893                              |
| iii  | Qadirabad Headworks  | Wildlife Sanctuary       | 7040                              |
| iv   | Maralla Headworks  | Game Reserve             | 1675                              |
| v  | Rasool Barrage   | Game Reserve             | 2812                              |
| vi   | Namal Lake   | Game Reserve             | 1200                              |
| vii  | Kallar Khar Lake   | Game Reserve             | 210                               |
| viii   | Ucchali Complex  | Wildlife Sanctuary / G.R | 5071                              |
| ix   | Khanki Headworks   | -                        | 672                               |
| <b>B- Central Zone Wetland Biological Complex</b>  |  |                          |                                   |
| x.   | Trimu Headworks  | -                        | 3680                              |
| xi.  | Balloki Headworks  | -                        | 2945                              |
| <b>C- Southern Zone Wetland Biological Complex</b> |  |                          |                                   |
| xii.   | Taunsa Barrage   | Wildlife Sanctuary       | 16900                             |
| xiii.  | Panjnad Headworks  | Wildlife Sanctuary       | 6868                              |
| xiv.   | Islam Headworks  | Game Reserve             | 7735                              |
| xv.  | Sulemanki Headworks  | -                        | 11559                             |
| <b>D-</b>  | <b><u>Misc. water bodies</u><br/>(Rivers, water logged areas, Rangla lake, Small dams and Marshy areas in Cholistan)</b> | -                        | <b>200,000<br/>(Approx)</b>       |
| <b>Total:-</b>                                     |  |                          | <b>154010+200,000<br/>=354010</b> |

## 5. PREVAILING THREATS TO WETLANDS OF PUNJAB:

### 5(i). THREATS AND VULNERABILITY

The following threats have been identified:

- Siltation and eutrophication
- Habitat shrinkage
- Persistent droughts
- Pollution and toxicity
- Leasing of pond areas
- Land use practices
- Chang in water quality
- Hunting Pressure on migratory route
- Multi dimension management

### 5(ii). EXISTING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF WETLANDS

Multi-lateral management of Wetlands has been focused on. The following Departments are important stakeholders in the management of wetlands of Punjab.

- i. Irrigation Department Punjab.
- ii. Punjab Wildlife & Parks Department.
- iii. Fisheries Department
- iv. Agriculture Department
- V. Environment Protection Agency

## 6. WHERE WE SHOULD BE?

Within five years the following key outputs will be ensured:

- Improvement of biodiversity of wetlands with better protection.
- Improvement in water quality and status of wildlife.
- Improvement of vegetation cover and pastures.
- Water shed management.
- Control of erosion.
- Control of siltation and eutrophication.
- Sustainable supply of water
- Availability of potential natural wildlife habitats
- Propagation of wildlife diversity.
- Availability of medicinal plants in natural habitats.
- Income generation through wildlife resource.
- Raising of nurseries for plants, both forest and fruit trees.
- An improved ENVIRONMENT
- Uplift of economic status of local communities.
- Availability of means of subsistence.

### **6(i). BENEFITS**

- Status of wildlife resources will be improved in a sustainable way.
- Globally threatened species will be conserved.
- Means of subsistence for local communities will be improved.
- Economic activities will be generated / promoted.
- Water quality will be improved, with healthy impacts on environment.
- Overall ecosystem will be preserved.
- Public education & awareness will be promoted.
- Management plans will be formulated for long terms development.
- Overall wildlife resources will flourish.

## **7. STRATEGY**

To achieve the objectives, the following strategy would be adopted:

- Development of Wetlands in a Phased Programme, Implementing development projects through ADP.
- Fund-sharing with NGO's and other sources for the development of wetland resources.
- Provision of logistics and additional staff for protection of wetlands.
- Provision of check posts, watch towers, for the monitoring of wetlands and associated wildlife.
- Involvement of local communities in wetland management.
- Public education and awareness.
- Participation of primary stake holders such as: Irrigation, Fisheries, Environment and Forest (Departments) in wetland conservation and protection.
- Research and Training.

