



Wetlands: what can I do?

You're convinced that wetlands provide a multitude of benefits, including filtering our water, ensuring biodiversity, protecting our coastlines, and mitigating climate change.

And you're alarmed that 64% of the world's wetlands have disappeared since 1900, and that the remaining ones are being degraded. So what can one person actually do to help turn the tide?

Seven actions you can take for wetlands

1 **Open your eyes to the wetlands near you**

Look around to see what types are in your area. Saltwater marshes, fens, swamps, peat bogs and mangroves are some of the more common types. Coral reefs, lakes and rivers are also considered wetlands.

- Visit a wetland near you to get a deep personal impression. What kind of vegetation and wildlife thrive there? How the site is being used? Go back at different times of year and observe how the surroundings change.
- If you see any illegal activities such as logging in a protected site, report it to the relevant authorities.
- Check the list of Ramsar Sites (www.ramsar.org/sites-countries/the-ramsar-sites) and see if there's a designated Wetland of International Importance in your area. If there's one listed, you can download a kmz file to create a placemark in Google Earth, complete with information about the site.

- Talk with the site managers to see what kind of help they could use.
- Is there a wetland site in your area that is not yet listed with Ramsar but perhaps should be protected? Contact a local government, university or NGO to see how you can help maintain its ecological character.

2 **Educate others**

- Often, wetlands are seen as wasteland; something to be filled in, drained, burned off or converted to other uses. You can help others to understand the huge benefits that wetlands bring, both globally and locally.
- Drop some interesting facts about wetlands into the conversation. Ramsar Fact Sheets are a great source for these.
 - Hold an educational event so people in your area can better understand how local wetlands benefit them.



3 Organize a wetlands clean-up

In populated areas, wetlands often attract rubbish.

- Working in a group for an hour or two can show how much of a clean-up can be achieved in a very short time.
- Take pictures before and after to highlight the difference.

4 Change your consumption habits

Saving water, reducing harmful waste and encouraging sustainable farming and fishing can all have a positive effect on wetlands.

- Buy sustainably raised or caught seafood, organic produce and meat.
- Use reusable bags at the grocery store.
- Take shorter showers.
- Recycle household trash, and make sure that batteries and other harmful waste do not end up in landfills – or in wetlands!

5 Manage your own garden consciously

Polluted water and invasive plants pose a real threat to wetlands. Improve the water and drainage effects of your own garden.

- Select native and pest-resistant plants and place them in settings that suit them.
- Use as little fertilizer as possible, and avoid toxic pesticides.
- Water thoroughly but infrequently, using collected rainwater.

6 Get involved in World Wetlands Day

Monday, February 2nd, 2015 is World Wetlands Day. Support this global day of awareness:

- Encourage youths aged 15-24 in your area to enter the World Wetlands Day Youth Photo Contest. Photos must be taken in a wetland location between 2 February and 2 March 2015 and uploaded to the WWD website (www.worldwetlandsday.org).

- Combine an educational event with World Wetlands Day.
- Consult the *Guide for teachers and organizers* for loads of tips.

7 Join with others to make a difference

Many organizations and networks already work for wetlands and their sustainable use. Link up with their efforts.

Here are just a few of the largest:

Wetlands International

The only global not-for-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands.

<http://www.wetlands.org>

IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature

The world's oldest and largest global environmental organization has more than 1,200 member organisations around the globe, including Ramsar. Search their member database here:

https://www.iucn.org/about/union/members/who_members/members_database/

Birdlife International

An alliance of 120-bird related organizations around the world. Search for partners by country here:

<http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/partnership/birdlife-partners>

WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature

Aims to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature. WWF works in more than 100 countries on 6 continents:

<http://www.wwf.org>

IMWI – The International Water Management Institute

A non-profit, scientific research institute focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries.

<http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/>

WWT – Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

A UK-based conservation charity that saves wetlands around the world.

<http://www.wwt.org.uk/>

WLI – Wetland Link International (WLI)

A support network for wetlands education centres that deliver engagement activities on site.

<http://wli.wwt.org.uk/>



This Fact Sheet is made available by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Statistics are drawn from a variety of publications and websites which are listed in the Reference Sources sheet, available for download separately. While we strive to provide accurate and carefully researched information, this publication is provided with no warranty of any kind.

The Ramsar Convention



The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, is a global intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global treaty to focus on one single ecosystem.