

World Wetland Day

**'Upstream - Downstream:
'Wetlands Connect Us All',**



BACKGROUND TO WORLD WETLAND DAY

The World Wetland Day is an annual event and marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Our slogan for World Wetlands Day 2009 is 'Upstream, Downstream: 'Wetland Connects Us All', designed around a theme of wetlands and river basin management and the roles our wetlands play in their surrounding environments. The campaign will provide an opportunity for people to understand the importance of wetlands, their interconnections with the river basin and how activities upstream are impacted by activities of those downstream.

Whether you are a farmer, fisherman, factory owner, or family – your activities have an impact on the wetlands which you live in or are surrounded with. The challenge this year is for you to improve the wetland that you depend upon.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

About Ramsar

Ramsar convention was adopted by 18 countries in the town of Ramsar in Iran in 1971. Fiji became a party to Wetland Ramsar Convention in the year 2006.

Definition of Wetlands

- Wetlands are areas where water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life. Wetlands under the Ramsar Convention includes mangroves, rivers and their tributaries, lakes and ponds, marsh, peats and bogs, inland swamps, dams and reservoirs, coastal flats and coral reefs, and human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, and salt pans.

Ramsar Mission:

- The conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.

Advantages of joining RAMSAR are as follows:

- Opportunities of getting financial and technical assistance on wetland activities on designated areas.
- International awareness on wetland issues.
- Assist in the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and ensure sustainable development on Wetland Areas

Fiji's first Designated Ramsar Site



Values and Functions of Wetlands

- Flood control
- Groundwater replenishment
- Shoreline stabilization and Storm Protection
- Sediment and nutrient retention
- Climate change mitigation
- Water purification
- Reservoirs of biodiversity
- Wetland products recreation/tourism
- Cultural value

Obligations of Contracting Parties:

- To designate and promote the conservation and wise use of National Ramsar sites.
- To promote training in wetland research and management
- To promote internationally and regionally cooperation

Name of wetland:

Upper Navua Gorge (Upper Navua Conservation Area - UNCA)

General location:

The Upper Navua Gorge in the Province of Serua and Namosi on the south-central side of Viti Levu.

Facts about Fiji's Ramsar Site - Upper Navua Conservation Area (UNCA)

- Sits on the Navua River which is Fiji's third largest river
- The UNCA encompasses this river gorge and about 10% of the entire Navua River Catchment area
- The forest, river and biodiversity provide the necessary supplies and food required for daily living and a wide range of ecosystem services to the entire area including flood control for lower areas
- The site is home to at least two vulnerable freshwater fish species only found in Fiji
- The forests surrounding the gorge contain 17 endemic species of birds, 15 of which are endemic to the island of Viti Levu
- Also present are the endangered Fiji Banded Iguana and the vulnerable Samoan Flying Fox

Administrative Arrangements for Fiji's Ramsar Activities

The Department of Environment is the National Focal point for the Ramsar Convention whose main role is to ensure Fiji's compliance to the requirements of the Convention.

A National Steering Committee was established in 2006 and meets regularly to assist Government in the management of the National Ramsar Site and the implementation of related activities.



For more information on the Ramsar Convention, contact the:

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