



Guide for teachers and organizers

The future of humanity depends on wetlands. This ecosystem provides and purifies our water, while replenishing the groundwater. It also provides the rice and fish that feed billions of people, acts as a natural sponge for protection against flooding and drought, ensures coastal protection as sea levels rise, and helps fight climate change.

Yet the general public are largely unaware of these vital benefits. If anything, wetlands are equated with wasteland; something to be filled in or converted to other uses. In fact scientists estimate that 64% of the world's wetlands have disappeared since 1900.

For World Wetlands Day 2015, we're asking for your help in turning the tide and helping to create awareness of just how essential wetlands are for our future.



For World Wetlands Day, we are specifically taking aim at the target group of tomorrow: youth aged 15-24.

Why youth? Teens and young adults have a growing interest in environmental issues, are tech savvy, and have a strong belief in their own ability to make a difference. Crucially, they also act as “transmitters,” spreading the word to their families and friends, causing a ripple effect that reaches the wider public.

You play an important role in reaching the youth audience.

World Wetlands Day 2015: three-step strategy



1 Provide an activity that gives youth a reason to visit and experience wetlands personally: the Wetlands Youth Photo Contest.

2 In parallel, educate youth on the benefits of wetlands and inject a sense of urgency about their rapid disappearance.

3 Plant a seed for them to take action on wetlands, and help them consider next steps they could take.

Educate youth on benefits of wetlands and their alarming loss

- Prior to or during site visits, teachers and other educators, community leaders and wetlands experts underscore the essential benefits of wetlands.
- Digital support materials include hand-outs with compelling examples and argumentation, and a Powerpoint presentation.

Reasons to visit wetlands: Wetlands Youth Photo Contest

- Contest is open to anyone aged 15-24.
- All photos must be taken with a phone or digital camera **in a wetland area between 2 February and 2 March 2015**, and uploaded to www.worldwetlandsday.org.
- All usage rights pass to Ramsar.
- Grand prize: airfare to a famous wetland of winner's choosing, courtesy of Star Alliance Biosphere Connections.

Plant a seed for action on wetlands and offer a next step

- Starting on 2 February 2015, youth will be able to make a personal pledge online at www.worldwetlandsday.org
- General suggestions for “what can I do” are provided in a World Wetlands Day hand-out.
- As a teacher, organizer or partner organization, you can also play a critical role in offering real, concrete “next steps” for youth to take locally.

How can you help as a WWD partner and organizer?

Teachers, event organizers and partner organizations will play a vital role in all three steps of World Wetlands Day. Here are a few ideas for how you can help:

Promote World Wetlands Day

Help create awareness of the day, and particularly of the Wetlands Youth Photo Contest. Use posters provided or create your own materials using the WWD sample layouts.

Promote or assist a local Ramsar Site

If there's a designated Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) in your area, get in touch with the managers of the site and see if they have a specific issue where they could use your help – or that of your students! Consult the list of Ramsar Sites by country at www.ramsar.org/sites-countries/the-ramsar-sites.

Make World Wetlands Day part of another event

If you've already got an event or initiative planned, consider how World Wetlands Day could support or enrich it. Use WWD ideas and materials to create a display or add a wetlands aspect to your activity.

Create or offer a “next step” for youth to take action on wetlands

Youth will be able to enter their own personal pledge on the World Wetlands Day website.

Partners and organizers can help extend the effect of World Wetlands Day by giving youth real, concrete actions to take on wetlands locally.

These might include:

Organize a wetlands site visit for youth

If you are a teacher or related to any sort of community or youth-related group, organizing a wetlands field trip between 2 February and 2 March 2015 will help in several ways:

- Give youth the opportunity to experience wetlands personally
- Increase hunger for knowledge about this ecosystem
- Encourage entries into the photo contest

- Organizing a local wetlands clean-up
- Volunteering at a wetlands site
- Taking everyday decisions with awareness of the environment
- Joining a wetlands, water or conservation-related organization

Coordinate an educational event around World Wetlands Day

Identify a specific group locally that you believe needs to understand the vital importance of wetlands, and find an interesting way to appeal to them! (Check out our tips for organizing and promoting educational events.)



For teachers

Classroom discussion ideas



After outlining the critical benefits that wetlands provide and the alarming pace of their loss, teachers could direct classroom discussion in several different ways:

- Why is it that wetlands are so very important, yet their benefits remain largely unknown? What factors contribute to this lack of awareness? And why have wetlands so often been considered wasteland?
- Ask students to envision a world without wetlands. Given the numerous benefits that wetlands provide for humanity, what implications would their complete disappearance have? What would change locally, regionally and globally?
- What are the root causes for the worldwide loss in wetlands? And for loss in wetlands locally? Then turn the question around and ask how these causes can be addressed. What kind of action could someone take individually that will make a difference?

Teacher resources on wetlands

National Geographic provides a range of teacher materials on related issues:

Wetlands

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/topics/wetlands/?ar_a=1

Estuaries

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/topics/estuaries/?ar_a=1

Biodiversity

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/topics/biodiversity?ar_a=1

The US Environmental Protection Agency has this list of teacher resources on wetlands:

http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/outreach/education_index.cfm#cg

For event organizers

Event organizing tips

If you are putting a specific World Wetlands Day educational event together, there are several things you may want to consider:

Know your audience

Understanding who your audience is will increase the chances of making your event both effective and memorable.

- If you are not aiming for youth, who do you plan to target? Is there a specific subset of visitors who are decision makers who you want to influence?
- Will you invite local experts to participate, present or lead discussions?
- Do you need to frame the wetlands issue in a certain way for your audience?
- If they are already environmentally aware, what “next step” might you ask them to take?
- Can you provide them with a step to take during or after your event, the site visit, or online?
- What core concerns or beliefs can you build on to increase their willingness to act for wetlands?

Pick a format

There are many different types of events for influencing people; each has their own strengths. Which do you think would best reach to your target audience?

- Info table or poster display in a high-traffic location
- Presentation to an audience with a Q&A session afterwards
- Panel discussion with several experts and a moderator (perhaps you?)
- A guided wetlands site visit
- Wetlands clean-up

Decide how to measure your success

- Number of attendees
- Pledges for action or number of “first steps”
- Two polls of your participants; one at the start of your activity and one at the end

Attract press coverage

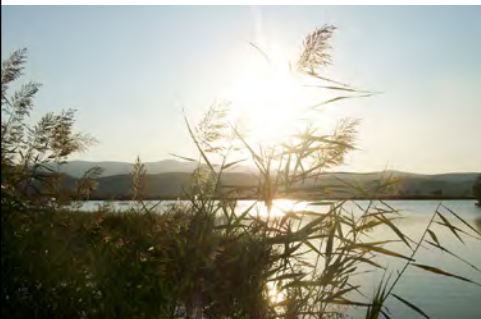
- Find out who covers environmental topics for your local newspaper, radio or TV station.
- Send them a simple notice of your event, and follow up with a personal invitation by phone or e-mail.
- Give journalists an interesting angle such as an expert who is speaking, or fun facts that they can mention.
- Reach out to bloggers in your area who are interested in environmental and sustainable development issues.

Share on social media

- <https://www.facebook.com/RamsarConventionOnWetlands>
- <https://twitter.com/RamsarConv>
- http://instagram.com/ramsar_convention_on_wetlands

Our expert advice: keep it simple and focus on one activity!

It's often better to focus your team on one tactic for World Wetlands Day and do it well, than to try to coordinate three or four activities.



For all World Wetlands Day supporters

To help with your World Wetlands Day activities, there's a wide assortment of materials you can download, use and adapt from www.worldwetlandsday.org

World Wetlands Day publicity materials

World Wetlands Day
Monday, 2 February 2015



Wetlands for our Future

Logo

World Wetlands Day logo

Posters

Three World Wetlands Day posters

- “Join us” call-to-action poster
- Photo contest poster
- Version for local adaptation

Guidelines

Graphic and logo guidelines and a template page for creating your own materials in the WWD look

Hand-outs

Four World Wetlands Day hand-outs (also usable as posters or flyers)

- Seven ways wetlands ensure our future
- Facts and paradoxes affecting our future
- A future without wetlands?
- Safeguard our future: what you can do!

Support materials

- Guide for teachers and organizers
- Powerpoint presentations on the benefits of wetlands and their loss
- Four Ramsar fact sheets covering the technical topics outlined in greater detail

Social media

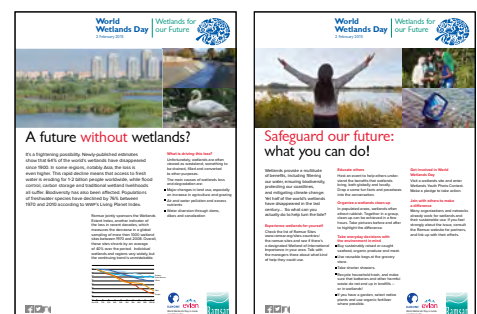
World Wetlands Day will be supported with a social media campaign.

- Facebook/RamsarConventionOnWetlands
- Twitter/@RamsarConv
- Instagram/ramsar_convention_on_wetlands

www.worldwetlandsday.org



Posters



Hand-outs