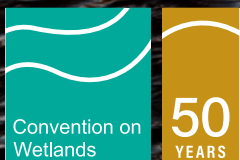


CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

50TH ANNIVERSARY

# CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT



## INTRODUCTION

In the 50 years since the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was founded, we have learned much more about the importance of Wetlands for water, disaster risk reduction, mitigating climate change, supporting biodiversity, and providing livelihoods.

Yet, despite our increased knowledge of the value and importance of Wetlands, they continue to be lost at an alarming rate. Key to ensuring their protection and wise use is creating broader understanding of the important role of Wetlands in sustaining life on our planet.

This anniversary campaign is designed to support Contracting Parties, organizations and individuals in celebrating and raising awareness about Wetlands throughout this anniversary year. The goal of the campaign is to achieve an increased public understanding about what Wetlands are, and the services they perform for humankind – with the ultimate goal of improving their protection.

The objectives in support of this goal are to:

- 1 Improve Wetlands literacy among key target groups so that they can both understand and articulate the importance, values and benefits of the habitat.**
- 2 Create a strong link between the component habitats that make up Wetlands – mangroves, salt marshes, peatlands, rivers, etc. -- and the term ‘Wetlands’.**

The campaign needs to inform, inspire, and engage a variety of audiences – from decision-makers to key influencers, young people to Wetlands visitors. We can do this by tuning in to the interests, commitments, and passions of each group.

The context of the campaign is Wetlands as a whole, and the strategy enables us to talk about them in terms of both their collective and component parts. This means we can focus on specific types of Wetlands, and their features and benefits, while framing them as part of a bigger Wetlands picture. We can go from the global to the local, encompassing both the Earth and the personal – and this scalability will be central to the creative expression of the campaign.

This is where you come in – we want Contracting Parties, stakeholders, civil society, and members of the general public to spread the message that Wetlands protect life, and we must protect Wetlands!

Tell us about your Wetlands, where are they, what do they do, what they mean to you, how you are using them?

The Secretariat of the Convention has developed a number of communications resources including fact sheets, social media tiles, draft tweets, a video and this toolkit to support you in using this Anniversary year to increase understanding of why wetlands are important.

Through the year resources to support outreach around international days in 2021 will be provided (see key dates timeline at the end of the documents).

All campaign resources are housed on a microsite where you can share predesigned tiles on Twitter and Facebook, as well create your own social tiles. Here you can showcase your work including social tiles you have created featuring your Wetlands and using the campaign hashtag #RestoreWetlands.

Together we can spread the word and create the understanding that Wetlands are vitally important to humanity and support myriad benefits and services that sustain life on our planet.



**#RestoreWetlands**

## INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is created to help you achieve impactful and consistent communications about Wetlands during the 50th Anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands. The aim of communications during this anniversary year is to increase understanding about Wetlands through consistent messaging designed to be compelling and accessible for different audiences.



The toolkit provides you with messages and examples of talking points and short texts that you can use, adapt or evolve based on your own context and communication objectives.

The Purpose of the 50th Anniversary campaign is to

**ENGAGE, INFORM & PROTECT**

The context is to

**SHARE A NARRATIVE ABOUT WETLANDS AS A MAJOR, PLANET-WIDE SYSTEM**

The core inspiration is

**WETLANDS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THE MYRIAD BENEFITS AND SERVICES THEY PROVIDE TO SUSTAIN LIFE ON OUR PLANET**

## FRAMING OF WETLANDS

The most fundamental challenge faced by Wetlands is their invisibility. Wetlands are hidden behind different presentations – marsh, lake, reef – they are not understood as a whole and their collective contribution to the functioning of the planet and humankind goes unnoticed and largely unremarked.



People do not understand what Wetlands are or do. The result is that Wetlands are undervalued and often even considered wastelands.

The framing for communications focusses on two things: what Wetlands are – identifying the different kinds of Wetlands within the whole; and what Wetlands do – the services they perform. We need people to understand both, in order that they will then care enough to protect Wetlands.

This can be at a meta level:

From mangroves to marshlands, rivers to rice paddies, coral reefs to peatlands, the places where land meets water and the waterbodies themselves create unique and special habitats known as Wetlands.

Wetlands are found across our world and work together to support and protect life. Wetlands, in all their forms, are a critical part of the Earth System – the ecosystem at work on our planet - and they make all life possible.

or the micro level:

[Named Marsh] is part of the planet-wide Wetlands habitat, found from the tropics to the tundra, that supports biodiversity, the water cycle, and climate regulation.

It provides valued services to us, from a

home for wading birds to leisure activities for our children, and contributes to the work of Wetlands globally, capturing and storing carbon to combat climate change and helping to hold our world in balance.

## KEY MESSAGES

There are two main messages that we want to communicate. They are interchangeable and either is sufficient on its own where opportunity is limited.



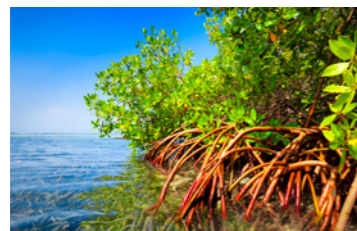
- 1 **Wetlands are a major, planet-wide habitat**
- 2 **Wetlands come in many different forms and make life on Earth possible**

These are key points of understanding Wetlands – to help educate about the component parts of Wetlands. The latter can be emphasised through the automatic inclusion of the phrase – ‘a Wetlands habitat’ – after every mention of an individual type.

For example:

**Restoration of mangroves, a Wetlands habitat, is greatly enhancing storm protection for coastal communities.**

**Peatlands, a Wetlands habitat, cover about 3% of our planet’s land yet store approximately 30% of all land-based carbon. That’s twice as much as all the world’s forests put together.**



## CORE TEXTS

### Wetlands

These statements can help audiences to appreciate the many types of Wetlands – beyond what they may naturally think of when they hear the word – and their fundamental role in the Earth System. They are key for understanding what Wetlands are.

- There are many different kinds of Wetlands. Those that we might think of as bodies of water, such as rivers, streams, floodplains, deltas, estuaries, lakes, ponds and ditches. Those that are literally wet land, like marshes, swamps, wet grasslands, mudflats, peat bogs, fens, wet woodlands and reedbeds. Those found on the coast, like mangroves, seagrass, salt marshes and coral reefs. And human-made Wetlands, like rice paddies and fish ponds. There is also the Antarctic – arguably the world’s largest Wetland since it is a giant lake that remains liquid below the ice.
- Article 1.1 of the Convention on Wetlands defines them as: “areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.”
- From mangroves to marshlands and rivers to peatlands, the place where land meets water creates a unique and special area. These Wetlands are found across our world and work together to support and protect life. Wetlands, in all their forms, are a critical part of the Earth System – the ecosystem at work on our planet - and they make all life possible.
- From your favourite local river to the whole of the Antarctic, Wetland habitats span the globe, including marshes, peatlands, coastal coral reefs and mangroves. They are all part of the unique areas that occur where land meets water, helping to hold our world in balance.

### Important Services

These statements can help inform audiences about the vital contributions Wetlands make to the global systems that make life on our planet possible. They are key for understanding what Wetlands do.

- There are many different kinds of Wetlands on our planet, from peatlands to mangroves, coral reefs to lakes. Each makes a unique contribution and all of them help to make life on Earth possible, from providing important habitats for biodiversity, to filtering and regulating our water supply, and buffering the impacts of climate change by protecting against storm surges and storing excess carbon from the atmosphere.

## CORE TEXTS

### Important Services (continued)

- Preserving Wetlands is a natural solution to climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Several kinds of Wetlands, such as coastal coral reefs and mangroves, contribute to disaster risk reduction by protecting coastlines and communities from flooding, storm surges, hurricanes and other extreme weather exacerbated by climate change.
- Many Wetland habitats, including peatlands and mangroves, help to mitigate climate change by absorbing vast amounts of CO2 from our atmosphere and storing it.
- Life thrives in Wetlands. They support a rich tapestry of biodiversity upon which we all depend. Mammals, birds, invertebrates and fish all find homes and necessary food resources in Wetland areas across the globe.
- Wetlands filter our water to clean it from natural and human-created impurities, nutrient and toxic pollution such as heavy metals and excess fertiliser.
- Wetlands are the terrestrial and coastal arteries of the global and local water-cycles.

### Domestic messaging

Statements like this create important links between local Wetlands and the global context, connecting people to the bigger picture of Wetlands contributions while highlighting the importance of protecting the local habitat.

- [Country/province/district name] is home to some of the most important Wetlands habitats in the world. Our (e.g.) [xxx] are inhabited by [xxx] species and store [xxx] tonnes of carbon – a service to all humankind. Our Wetlands are protected so that they can continue to provide a home for important species, a natural solution to climate change, and a joy to the tens of thousands who visit them every year.

## CORE TEXTS

### 50th Anniversary

These statements can help mark half a century of the Convention on Wetlands and draw attention to the growing threats to both Wetlands and the health of our planet today.

- Fifty years ago, in 1971, world leaders recognised that the many habitats which make up Wetlands are important for the health and functioning of the planet and humankind. They established an intergovernmental global treaty to highlight this importance and to increase Wetlands protection and wise use across the globe.
- The Convention on Wetlands is still the only global treaty to focus on a single ecosystem. Today, over 2,400 Wetlands of high value have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Convention on Wetlands, together making up an area larger than Algeria.
- In the 50 years since the Convention on Wetlands was created, we have learned more about the importance of the role of Wetlands in the water cycle, for disaster risk reduction, in mitigating climate change, and supporting biodiversity; but during this time the overall health of the planet has declined with serious consequences for all habitats. Many of the causes of this decline have a highly detrimental effect on Wetlands, so it is more important than ever that their role on our planet is understood and that measures are taken to ensure their protection and wise use.
- In the 50 years since the Convention on Wetlands was established, the overall health of our planet has deteriorated with a heavy impact on these special habitats. About 35% of the world's Wetlands have disappeared since the 1970s and those that remain are vanishing three times faster than forests. In marking 50 years, this is a time to redouble our efforts to protect Wetlands and to increase global understanding about their importance in our world.



## USING THE KEY MESSAGES



The following message wheels demonstrate how to communicate a classic two or three-point message in line with the framing and approaches while still making them relevant to your particular context.

### Individual habitats

Mangroves, a Wetlands habitat, stand between humans and some of the worst effects of climate change by absorbing carbon and protecting land from storms and surges. It is key that we increase protection and wise use of these vital Wetlands habitats.

Coastal coral reefs are one of the many habitats that make up the Wetlands of our planet, the extraordinary areas where land meets water in a unique relationship that provides homes and rest stops for species and natural carbon solutions for us.



As Spring approaches the Northern Hemisphere, migratory birds begin arriving from the South, heading for [insert name of your local lake], one of the many different kinds of Wetlands that will be their home for the coming months.

This marsh is a Wetlands habitat and is a critical resting spot for migratory birds and other important planet-wide services, such as carbon sequestration and nutrient cycling. Protecting this marsh will enable us to preserve those crucial services.

## USING THE KEY MESSAGES

### Alignment with other processes and issues

Wetlands are a critical habitat that cover only 6% of our planet but provide habitats and services to the whole world. They come in many forms, from mangroves to marshes, and work across the planet to help tackle climate change.

The impacts of climate change would be much more severe without the mitigation benefits of Wetlands, which absorb vast quantities of carbon dioxide. That is why we are protecting Wetlands like peatlands and mangroves and ensuring they are used wisely to help conserve this essential service to humankind.

Wetland habitats are performing an important service across our planet in helping to mitigate climate change by absorbing more carbon than all the forests of the world. It is essential that all Wetlands are protected and used wisely to preserve this vital service to humankind.

Increasing protection to Wetlands is an immediate action that can be taken to help combat climate change. Preserving the natural carbon sequestration work of the many habitats which make up Wetlands will help mitigate the effects of the climate crisis while we reach for lower emissions.



Biodiversity loss is a significant threat to our planet and human wellbeing and tackling this must include urgent attention to preserve Wetlands around the world. From mangroves to marshes, Wetlands are home to myriad species and provide critically important services to the planet.

This year we hope to agree to new targets to protect biodiversity around the world through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Both inland and coastal Wetlands provide a unique and rich habitat, and should be a major target for attention by States.

The Convention on Wetlands is an important tool to help us manage our critically important Wetland habitats globally, alongside the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity. Together these Conventions help protect the vital functioning of our planet.

## TALKING POINTS

### General

- Wetlands are the most biologically diverse ecosystems on our planet, home to about 40% of Earth's plant and animal species. Collectively, they cover an area larger than Canada and absorb more carbon from the atmosphere than any other ecosystem on Earth.
- Wetlands like peatlands, salt marshes, mangroves and seagrasses are the most effective carbon sinks on Earth, absorbing and storing twice as much carbon as all the world's forests combined. Although peatlands only cover 3% of the Earth's surface, they sequester and store up to a third of all land-based carbon.
- Nearly half of all Wetlands are only wet for part of the year, becoming saturated with water on a seasonal basis, but are just as important as their permanently wet counterparts.
- Some Wetlands are actually dry for part of the year, with just under half (46%) only wet during specific seasons, such as tropical savannas. The rest (54%) are wet all the time, such as coastal coral reefs and lakes.
- There are many different kinds of Wetlands. They are:
  - Bodies of water: rivers, streams, floodplains, deltas, estuaries, lakes, ponds and ditches.
  - Bodies of wet land: wet grasslands, marshes, mudflats, peat bogs, fens, wet woodlands, swamps and reedbeds.
  - Coastal: mangroves, seagrass, salt marshes and coral reefs.
  - Polar: Arctic and Antarctic wetlands.
- In the Arctic, the main ecosystems are Wetlands, accounting for approximately 60% of the Arctic's total terrestrial surface area, including tundra peatlands, coastal marine areas, and open freshwater bodies.

### Services

- Wetlands play a crucial role in the water cycle, receiving, transporting, cleaning, storing and releasing fresh water to support all life on Earth.
- Wetlands work hard for our planet, performing a series of tasks to help keep our world healthy and balanced. For example, they help to recycle important natural elements needed for all life and remove and store excess carbon from the atmosphere.
- Some Wetlands are found along the coast, such as mangroves, salt marshes, seagrass beds and coral reefs. These coastal Wetlands are very important for drawing down carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in the ground to help reduce the impacts of climate change.
- Peatlands are also large reservoirs of carbon, surpassing even forests in the amount of carbon dioxide they can store away from the atmosphere.

## TALKING POINTS

### Services (continued)

- Across the world, Wetlands are of great importance to humanity, not just for their role in keeping our planet balanced and healthy but for their cultural significance, economic contribution, and spiritual importance in many cultures.
- All agricultural production depends on water which is transported and provided to humankind through Wetlands. More than half of the world relies on wetland-grown produce for their staple diet, for example from rice paddies.
- Wetlands also provide more than a billion livelihoods across the world in an array of activities that also deliver food, water supplies, transport, and leisure. Wetlands loss contributes to poverty and food insecurity.
- Wetlands help to purify and keep our drinking water clean. They can remove up to 60% of metals, trap and hold up to 90% of contaminated soil from agricultural and other uses, and remove up to 90% of nitrogen.

### Species

- Penguins and piranhas, whales and wolves, bears and bats, squid and spiders all use Wetlands to survive.
- Lanus de Moxos in Bolivia is the largest protected Wetland Site of International Importance in the world and is home to over 1,000 different plant species; 565 different kind of birds, 625 kinds of fish, 100 reptiles and 60 amphibians.
- Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems on Earth – providing a home and food for a vast array of different plants and creatures.
- Wetlands are rest spots for migratory waterbirds and waders, which rely on them for refueling sites during their long migrations.
- Freshwater Wetlands cover about 6% of the planet's surface but are home to 40% of all species.
- There is more animal diversity in Wetlands than in any other major ecosystem in the world.
- Over 100,000 freshwater species have been identified in Wetlands so far, and over 200 species of freshwater fish are discovered every year. Coastal marine wetlands are among the most important spawning and nursery areas for commercially important fish species.
- Since 1970, Wetlands decline has affected 81% of inland Wetland species populations and 36% of coastal and marine species populations.

## KEY DELIVERY MOMENTS

### 50TH ANNIVERSARY 2021

The following outlines key delivery moments in 2021 and the campaign content that will be made available to those engaging in the campaign. Additional dates will be added to this as new meetings and opportunities are confirmed throughout the year.

<b>March 22nd</b>	<b>World Water Day</b>
March 15th	Supporting content available: <i>2 x social media tiles formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</i> <i>Supporting tweets</i>
<b>May 8th</b>	<b>World Migratory Bird Day</b>
May 3rd	Supporting content available: <i>1 x animation</i> <i>2 x social media tiles formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</i> <i>Supporting tweets</i>
<b>May 22nd</b>	<b>International Day for Biological Diversity</b>
May 17th	Supporting content available: <i>2 x social media tiles formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</i> <i>Supporting tweets</i>

## KEY DELIVERY MOMENTS

### 50TH ANNIVERSARY 2021

All materials in English, French and Spanish are available on the campaign microsite ([ramsar50.org](https://ramsar50.org)).

<b>June 8th</b>	<b>World Ocean Day</b>
June 1st	Supporting content available: <i>2 x social media tiles formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</i> <i>Supporting tweets</i>
<b>August 12th</b>	<b>International Youth Day</b>
August 6th	Supporting content available: <i>2 x social media tiles formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</i> <i>Supporting tweets</i>
<b>October 13th</b>	<b>International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction</b>
October 6th	Supporting content available: <i>2 x social media tiles formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</i> <i>Supporting tweets</i>
<b>November 1st-12th</b>	<b>UNFCCC COP 26</b>
October 25th	Supporting content available: <i>2 x social media tiles formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</i> <i>Supporting tweets</i>



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THANK YOU



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