

Wetland Biodiversity

Why it matters



World
Wetlands Day
2 February 2020
Wetlands and biodiversity



Convention on
Biological Diversity



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Biodiversity is:

the **variability among living organisms** from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.



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Wetlands are:

Land areas saturated or flooded with water, permanently or seasonally

- **Inland wetlands:** marshes, peatlands ponds, lakes, rivers, floodplains, swamps, fens
- **Coastal wetlands:** saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons, coral reefs
- **Human-made wetlands:** fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs, saltpans

Wetlands are rich with biodiversity



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Wetlands are rich reservoirs of biodiversity

- **40%** of the world's plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands
- Over **100,000 freshwater species** have been identified in wetlands so far
- **Coastal wetlands**, especially, are among the most biologically diverse places



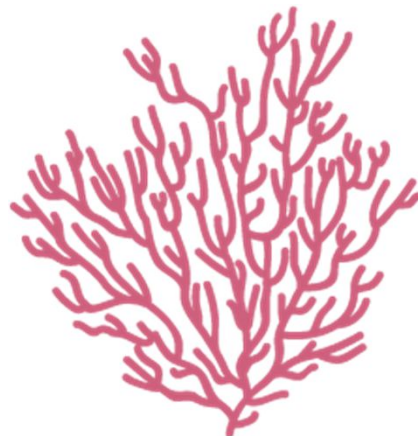
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Life thrives in wetlands

- **30%** of known fish species, with **200 new freshwater species** discovered annually
- Many at-risk **amphibians** and **reptiles**
- Migratory and resident **water birds**
- Thousands of **plant species**
- **Endemic species** – only found in a specific wetland



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Why wetland biodiversity matters?

- Swamp vegetation filters pollutants, **making water potable**
- Wetlands provide **livelihoods** for one billion people and help **feed the world**
- Peatlands store 30% of land-based **carbon**
- Lakes and rivers **supply food** and medicine
- Mangroves and coral reefs **protect coastal communities** during storm surges, hurricanes and tsunamis
- Wetlands provide **ecosystem services** worth USD \$47 trillion annually, more than those from forests, deserts or grasslands



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Humans are destroying wetlands

- Wetlands are vanishing **three times faster** than forests
- **35%** have disappeared since the **1970s**. **87%** have been lost since the **1700s**

Causes of wetland loss:

- Drainage and infilling for agriculture and construction
- Pollution
- Overexploitation of resources (e.g., overfishing)
- Invasive species
- Climate change



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Biodiversity is in steep decline

Wetland species are declining most

- Between 1970 and 2014, populations of fish, birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles **declined by 60%**
- Since 1970, **81% of inland wetland species** and **36% of coastal and marine species** have declined
- **25%** of wetland species are **threatened with extinction**, including water birds, freshwater-dependent mammals, marine turtles, and coral-reef- building species



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This is an emergency

- **One million** animal and plant species are threatened with extinction
- **Species are declining** faster than at any time in human history and the pace is accelerating
- **Climate change** is making it worse
- Citizens, NGOs, and governments are working to **reverse the trends**. But we are not doing enough



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End biodiversity loss

- **Restore, conserve** and promote **wise use** of all wetlands
 - Don't drain
 - Don't build over
 - Don't degrade
- Assess the real **value** of wetlands

Wetlands are rich with biodiversity



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World Wetlands Day: 2 February

Celebrated annually to raise global awareness about the **value of wetlands**

Wetlands and Biodiversity, theme 2020

Get involved

- **Organize an event** to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands biodiversity
 - Register and upload your event to worldwetlandsday.org
- **Visit worldwetlandsday.org** to download information materials to share and raise awareness
- **Learn about the types of wetlands** in your country



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The Convention on Wetlands

Only **global treaty** to focus on a single ecosystem

- Adopted in Ramsar, Iran in 1971
- 171 Contracting Parties

Contracting Parties commit to:

- Designate wetlands of high value on the list of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)
- Use all wetlands wisely and cooperate on transboundary issues
- Number of Ramsar Sites: 2,300,
- Total surface of designated Sites: 249,579,562 million hectares (slightly larger than Mexico)



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Thank you.

www.worldwetlandsday.org



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