

WORLD WETLAND DAY: WETLANDS & WATER

Wetlands are distinct ecosystems that are flooded by water—either temporarily or permanently. Marshes, fens, swamps, and bogs are all examples of distinct types of wetlands.

While wetlands account for only 6-7% of Earth's surface area, they breathe life into incredibly diverse biospheres. Beyond biodiversity, wetlands are crucial because:

1. We are in a global fresh water crisis. Only **2.5% of water on Earth is freshwater**, & only **1% is usable**. It is imperative to protect wetlands which naturally filter clean water.
2. Of all water sources, biologists believe that **wetlands are the most depended upon** by wildlife & humans.
3. **Aquaculture is an emerging solution to world hunger**, with crops such as rice paddies and fisheries harvested in wetlands.
4. Wetlands offer a boost to global economies, with over **1 billion people relying on wetlands for their income** including aquaculture, recreation industries, and biologists.
5. Wetlands **absorb over 1.5 million gallons of water annually**, preventing or lessening damaging floods.
6. Wetlands, such as peatlands, **absorb 2x as much carbon as forests**, thus helping regulate climate change.

It is estimated that 50% of the world's wetlands have disappeared to urbanization, pollution, water drainage, unsustainable use, invasive species, and other causes. They need our help.

How YOU can help wetlands:

- Support conservation centres including volunteering at shore-line clean-ups or BioBlitzes
- Compost and recycle to cut down on pollution
- Limit chemicals in your garden that could filter into a wetland
- Avoid invasive species in gardens, opting for native plants instead
- Increase your water efficiency to avoid waste
- Enjoy wetlands sustainably - never litter, respect the wildlife, and making sure you aren't introducing invasive species or chemicals
- Encourage your town to integrate wetland health *into* development
- Most importantly—help educate others!

TEACHING ABOUT WETLANDS

You can use household items as a metaphor to help visualize or teach your family & friends all the ways that wetlands help the world around us!



Object	Metaphor for Wetland Function
Sponge	Absorbs excess water caused by runoff and releases it in times of need
Pillow	A resting place for migratory species including birds and butterflies
Egg Beater	Mixes nutrients/ oxygen into water
Cradle	Provides shelter, protection, and food for young wildlife
Strainer	Strains salt and debris from water to keep the water clean
Coffee Filter	Filters smaller impurities from water such as excess nutrients or toxins
Antacid	Neutralizes toxic substances
Garden	Provides nutrient rich foods for wildlife and humans
Soap	Helps clean the environment
Picture of a Zoo	Habitat for extremely diverse wildlife including mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians

