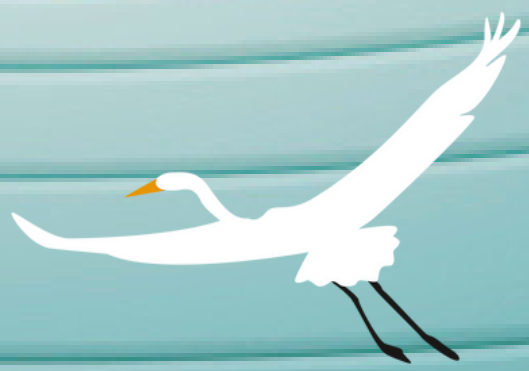
Happy World Wetlands Day!



World Wetlands Day
2 February 2023

www.worldwetlandsday.org

#GenerationRestoration

#ForWetlands

Wetlands

Land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally.

TYPES OF WETLANDS

Inland wetlands:

- marshes, lakes, rivers, floodplains, and swamps

Coastal wetlands:

- saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and coral reefs

Human-made wetlands:

- fish ponds, rice paddies and salt pans

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Wetland Restoration: Why is it time?

Wetlands are vital for humanity…

Freshwater is rare. Wetlands provide most of it.

- Only **2.5%** of water on earth is freshwater, mostly stored in glaciers and aquifers.
- Less than **1%** is usable, **0.3%** is found in wetlands such as rivers and lakes.

Wetlands store more carbon than forests.

- Peatlands cover **3%** of our planet yet store around **30%** of all land-based carbon.
- Coastal wetlands like mangroves sequester and store carbon up to **55 times** faster than tropical rain forests.

Wetlands help us cope with storms and flooding.

- **60%** of humanity lives and works in coastal areas.
- Saltmarshes, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs shield coastal communities in extreme weather.
- Inland, a single acre of wetland can absorb up to **1.5 million** gallons of floodwater.

Wetlands are a source of livelihoods and food.

- More than a **billion** people live from fishing, aquaculture and tourism.
- Wetland paddies provide rice for **3.5 billion** people.

But we're at a tipping point. Wetlands are disappearing.

Wetlands are being lost three times faster than forests.

- They're the Earth's most threatened ecosystem.
- More than **80%** of all wetlands have disappeared since the 1700s.
- The trend is accelerating. Since 1970, at least **35%** of the world's wetlands have been lost.

Human activities are driving wetland degradation.

- Wetlands are being drained and filled in for agriculture and urban construction.
- Water pollution and overfishing are harming wetland ecosystems, along with invasive species.

Wetland species are facing extinction.

- One in three freshwater species and **25%** of all wetland species face actual extinction from wetland decline.
- **81%** of inland wetland species and **36%** of coastal and marine species have declined in the last 50 years.

Restoring lost and degraded wetlands is urgent!

Ramsar
Convention on Wetlands

World Wetlands Day
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It's time for wetland restoration

7 benefits of restoring wetlands

A well restored wetland can provide many of the services performed by the original natural wetland. Here are seven ways restored wetlands can benefit us directly:

1

Revive biodiversity

40% of the world's species live or breed in wetlands. Restoring wetlands powers the local food chain and attracts wildlife.

2

Replenish and filter water supply

Wetlands naturally filter water, remove pollutants and boost the local water supply.

3

Store carbon

Specific types of wetlands, especially peatlands, mangroves, intertidal marshes and seagrass beds are exceptionally efficient carbon sinks.

4

Blunt the impact of floods and storms

Restored wetlands can act as sponges against excess rainfall and flooding, buffer coastal storm surges, and can shield communities in extreme weather.

5

Improve livelihoods

Wetlands create livelihoods in fishing and aquaculture, and also provide goods like reeds and grasses. These opportunities often benefit indigenous populations.

6

Boost eco-tourism

A restored wetland can be a sustainable magnet for visitors; a natural attraction that draws tourists along with opportunities to serve them.

7

Enhance well-being

Revitalized wetlands provide a place to relax, experience nature – and enjoy sense of satisfaction at their resurgence.

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Wetlands give livelihoods to one billion and feed 3.5 billion.

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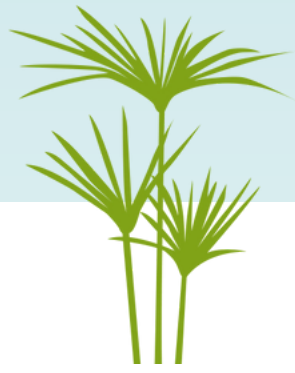

7 best practices in wetland restoration

Fully re-creating the benefits of a natural wetland may take time, but with restoration many harmful effects of degradation can be reversed. Successful wetland restoration projects…

1

Restore multiple benefits

A natural wetland provides a multitude of services. Take a holistic view in restoration, recapturing many benefits, not just one or two.

2

Develop a restoration plan

In a natural wetland ecosystem, the vegetation, the wildlife and the site itself all draw from and give to each other. Aim to re-create this self-sustaining cycle and monitor the results.

3

Involve the community

Ensure that local residents and businesses have a voice in the restoration. Give them a role in maintaining the restored site. Involve women, youth and indigenous people.

4

Address the causes of degradation

Assess and understand first what led to the degradation. Limit pressures such as overharvesting of water and pollution from agriculture, industry and urban development.

5

Restore native flora and fauna

Re-create the original hydrological conditions, replant native vegetation and reintroduce native wildlife. Weed out invasive species.

6

Clean up the degraded area

Remove any debris, trash and waste that has accumulated in the wetland. This makes people less likely to treat the area like a dump.

7

Structure access to the wetland

Create specific spaces for people to access the wetland. List which activities are allowed where. Designate zones where wildlife can thrive.

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Bold actions

Use your own **power to create change and support wetland restoration**, locally, regionally or nationally:

Create an advocacy effort

- Encourage local, state and national governments to protect local wetlands and restore degraded ones.

Hold or join a public wetlands cleanup day

- Remove debris, trash and waste that has
- accumulated in the wetland.

Get directly involved in a local wetland restoration project.

- Get input and help ensure that the restoration efforts reflect the needs of local residents.

Add your event to the global map and search directory.

- Our online interactive map shows what events are taking place and where around the world for World Wetlands Day.

Share a photo of your bold actions on the Restoration Photo Gallery.

- This photo gallery aims to show where restoration is happening around the world to motivate and inspire more restoration efforts.

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Invasive Species Impacts on Wetlands

1. Invasive plants, insects, and animals outcompete native species that are vital to wetlands

2. The ecosystem services wetlands provide are hindered by invasive species as wetland communities cannot function at its full capacity

3. Erosion can happen when invasive species take over, which furthers wetland degradation

Common Reed *(Phragmites australis)* is an invasive wetland plant that crowds out native species. This reduces food and habitat for native wildlife. Today, phragmites are estimated to cover up to a third of the tidal wetlands along the East Coast.

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