



Puducherry ENVIS Hub

Host Centre : Puducherry Pollution Control Committee

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Government of India, New Delhi



World



Wetlands Day

2nd February, 2021

Theme : Wetlands and Water

What is Wetlands?

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of 1971 defines wetlands 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". and "may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands".

Walk along the Wetlands



Why it is Celebrated?

We celebrate World Wetlands Day (WWD) to raise global awareness about the high importance of wetlands for people and our planet. WWD is also an occasion to commemorate the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971.

"Wetlands and water", the theme for WWD 2021, shines a spotlight on wetlands as a source of freshwater and encourages actions to restore them and stop their loss. We are facing a growing freshwater crisis that threatens people and our planet. We use more freshwater than nature can replenish, and we are destroying the ecosystem that water and all life depend on most - Wetlands.

2021 - the 50th Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention

Throughout 2021 we are celebrating 50 years of the Convention.

The 2021 theme is 'Wetlands and Water'. This highlights the role wetlands play in:

- clean water
- water supply
- ecosystem resilience
- sustainable livelihoods and jobs
- biodiversity conservation
- storm protection
- carbon storage
- climate change adaptation
- health and well-being
- tourism and recreation



What are the different types of wetlands?

Marsh - Marsh is the predominant wetland found at Wye Marsh and is often characterized by the presence of cattails and other reeds, rushes and sedges. Marshes are also characterized by slow or standing water.

• **Swamp** - Swamps are wetlands that are characterized by seasonally standing or moving water as well as occasional trees and shrubs.

• **Fen** - Fens are peatlands dominated by grasses, sedges, reeds, black spruce and tamarack.

• **Bog** - Bogs are also peatlands, but are dominated by peat mosses and black spruce trees.

Open Water - Shallow or open water is characterized by water depths less than 2 metres and are usually transitions stages between lakes and marshes





Why Wetlands are called Ramsar Sites?

- In 1971, an international treaty was signed at Ramsar,
- Iran for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
- The mission of the Convention is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through.
- Local and National actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving
- Sustainable development throughout the world”.
- Ramsar Convention is an only intergovernmental treaty which gives a solid framework to the nations for the conservation and use of wetlands and their resources and helps to protect such unique ecosystems.
- It is also known as the “Convention on Wetlands”. It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar on 2nd February 1971 and came into force on 21st December 1975.

The mission of the Convention

- The mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and international actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world”.
- Contracting parties vow for international cooperation to protect wetlands in the following
- Three ways known as “three pillars for co-operation”.

1. Make judicious use of all their wetlands
2. Designate suitable wetlands for the list of “Wetlands of International Importance” (Ramsar List) and ensure effective management of the wetlands.
3. International cooperation on transboundary wetlands shared wetland systems etc.

Wetland Conservation

Why is wetland conservation anything to be concerned about?

Well wetlands are crucial habitat for waterfowl and many other wildlife and plants serving as the ecosystem. Wetlands perform essential services to us that we are mostly not even aware of: mitigate flooding, provide a source of water in droughts, prevent erosion, clean our water and can even help to mitigate climate change by helping to store greenhouse gases.

Most importantly wetlands, just like the Wye Marsh, offer one of the best sources for low impact recreation and learning opportunities for people in all walks of life.

But even with all those crucial roles that wetlands play they are still one of the most threatened habitats/ecosystems on Earth.

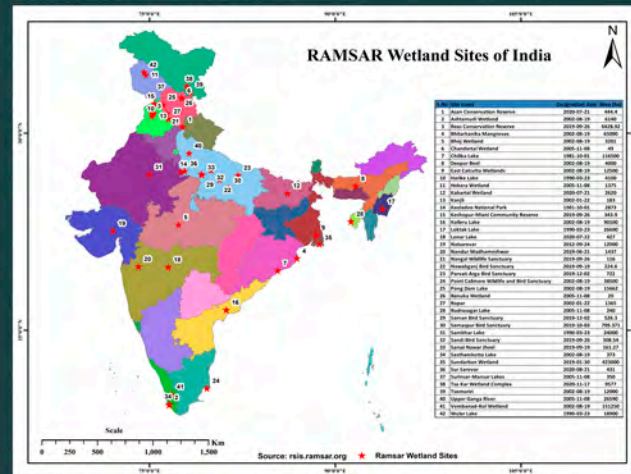
Wetland restoration is a long and difficult process so the best practice is to protect the wetlands that remain. And by reading this page you are already becoming aware of the issues that face wetlands and can hopefully make some positive contributions to their protection.

Wetland losses – a threat to ecological balance

- o Dredging, draining, and/or filling wetland areas for conversion to agricultural, industrial or residential lands
- o Population growth and urban development
- o Sand and gravel mining and mineral extraction activities
- o Peat extraction activities
- o Timber harvesting
- o Oil and gas exploration
- o Waste disposal
- o Storm-water pollution and water contamination
- o Nutrient enrichment



Map of RAMSAR Wetland Sites in India (As on December, 2020)



(Source: Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India)

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