



February 2024

Environmental Message

World Wetlands Day

Wetlands encompass areas such as inlets, mangroves and mudflats, to flood-plains, peat bogs, fishponds and rice paddies. To raise awareness about these important ecosystems and the global loss of wetlands, February 2nd is celebrated as World Wetlands Day. Wetlands have a huge biodiversity that improve water quality, store carbon, provide clean drinking water, provide food, and protect against floods and droughts. Human impacts have caused the size and quality of wetlands to decline in biodiversity, threatening food security and livelihoods as well. They are destroyed primarily by unsustainable agricultural practices where wetlands are drained and infilled to create arable land. Those wetlands near population centers and cities have been polluted by human activities and further degraded by trash pollution, primarily plastic. Climate change has also had a negative impact on the fragile wetlands through drought, increase rainfall and temperature changes.

Key facts about Wetland Food, Water, Biodiversity, and Livelihoods:

- Fish from wetlands are the primary source of protein for more than 1 billion people.
- Agriculture accounts for 70% of water withdrawals from the Earth's wetlands.
- Wetlands hold and provide most of our freshwater.
- Less than 1% of freshwater is usable.
- About 40% of the world's plant and animal species depend on wetlands.
- Ingestion, entanglement, and other dangers posed by plastic pollution are affecting more than 800 marine and coastal species.
- Wetlands provide more than 1 billion livelihoods across the world - delivering food, water supplies, transport, and leisure.
- Almost 1 billion households in Asia, Africa and the Americas rely on rice growing and processing for their main livelihoods.

To learn more about World Wetlands Day visit: <https://www.worldwetlandsday.org/>

