



Wetlands

Discover an ecosystem
important for life

Ramsar

Convention
on Wetlands

A PLATFORM TO CONSERVE THE WORLD'S WETLANDS



The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The Ramsar Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. Since then 169 countries, almost 90% of UN member states, have signed up as Contracting Parties to the Convention.

Contracting Parties commit to :

- work towards the wise use of all their wetlands;
- designate wetlands considered of high value to the country and the world on the list of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) and ensure their effective management;
- cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.

WORLD'S WETLANDS IN NUMBERS

660



million

people depend on wetlands

Wetlands are home to

100 000

known species



220

million

hectares protected

12,1 million
km²

estimated total global
wetland surface area

2,288

designated Ramsar Sites in 2017

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PROTECTED WETLAND SITES

An international network of diverse types of wetlands sites, recognized as vital for a country, global biological diversity and important for sustaining life. The act of designating a wetland as a Ramsar Site, is a first step on a pathway to conserve its ecological character and commit to its sustainable management and use.



Impluvium d'Evian

Close to Lac Léman, near the border with Switzerland, the site is located in the heart of a plateau where the popular mineral waters of Evian have their origin as rainwater that is absorbed in the soil. During the infiltration process it is purified and redistributed underground, feeding the aquifer.

The Société des Eaux d'EVIAN, part of the DANONE Group, have joined forces with 41 farmers and 16 towns in the area, to create the “Terragr’eau” project, that protects Evian’s natural mineral water watershed and reinforces sustainable farming practices.

Designated a Ramsar Site in 2008.



© La voix du Paysan Congolais

Ngiri-Tumba - Maindombe

Located in the Democratic Republic of Congo and adjacent to Lake Télé in the Republic of Congo, the Site is situated on one of the largest freshwater bodies in Africa and the world.

Because of its extensive peatland soils, the Site is considered one of the largest carbon sinks in Africa. It is home to the endemic bonobo. Diversified agriculture and artisanal fishing are the main activities of local populations and generate much of their income.

Designated a Ramsar Site in 2008.



Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay

Located in Hong Kong, China, Mai Po is a shallow coastal bay with extensive intertidal mudflats backed by dwarf mangroves, shrimp and fishponds. The aquaculture activities, built in the 1930's, carried out in Mai Po provide a good example of how artificial or semi-artificial habitats can support a high diversity of wildlife under proper management.

Research, conservation education, fish farming and recreation are the main activities carried out on the Site. Over 40,000 people, visit the reserve annually for birdwatching or informal education.

Designated a Ramsar site in 1995.



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Reserva Particular do Patrimônio Natural SESC Pantanal

Known as Poconé's Pantanal in Brazil, the Reserve is a private estate fully owned by the Serviço Nacional do Comércio (SESC) and established in 1998. The Site is a mix of permanent rivers, seasonal streams, permanent and seasonal floodplain fresh water lakes, shrub-dominated wetlands, and seasonally flooded forests. The Reserve provides essential ecological refuge for 260 fish species in the Cuiabá and São Lourenço rivers.

The SESC administers this private reserve, under the supervision of the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Renewable Resources (IBAMA), and is responsible for implementing its management plan and carrying out environmental education activities and non-intensive ecotourism at the Site.

Designated a Ramsar Site in 2002.

Wetlands in a nutshell

“Wetlands provide essential services for nature and people. They provide water for consumption, protect us from floods, store carbon and other functions critical to achieve sustainable development. Yet, wetlands are under threat and are being lost faster than any other ecosystem mainly due to land use conversion, water diversion and infrastructure development. I invite you to take action to conserve, sustainably use and restore this vital ecosystem.”

Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Why Wetlands are important?

1. 

Wetlands ensure fresh water for all of us

Wetlands provide us with drinking water. Only 0,75% of the world's fresh water is accessible for direct human uses. The UN estimates that 2 billion people will not have access to safe drinking water by 2025.

2. 

Wetlands filter harmful waste from water

80% of wastewater is discharged into the natural environment without any form of treatment. The abundant plant life in wetlands absorbs waste, which helps purify water.

3. 

Wetlands store carbon

Peatlands alone hold 30% of all carbon stored on land. This is twice the amount stored in the world's forests, providing resilience against climate change.

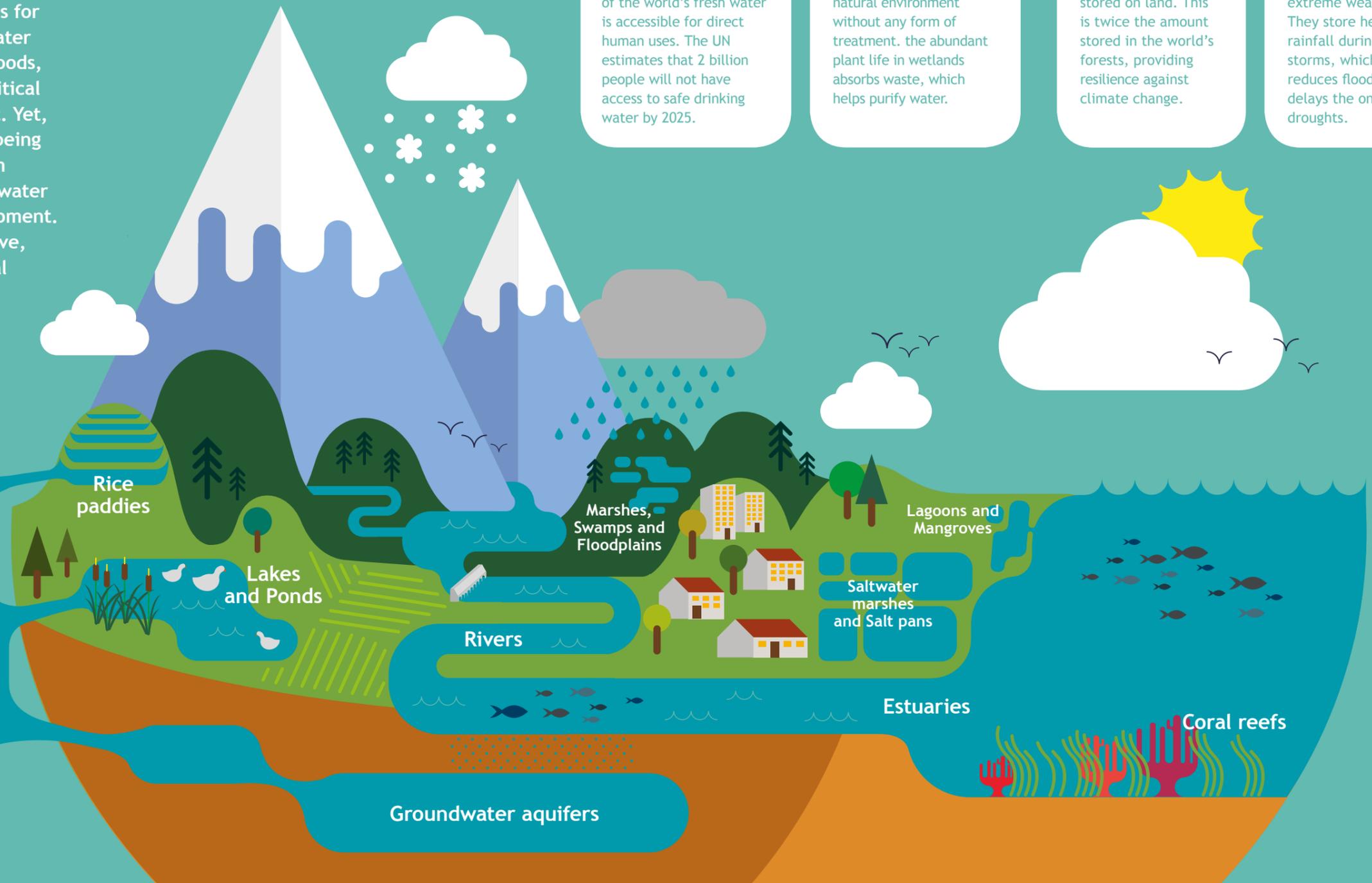
4. 

Wetlands are nature's shock absorbers

Wetlands are a natural buffer during extreme weather. They store heavy rainfall during storms, which reduces flooding and delays the onset of droughts.

What are Wetlands?

A wetland is defined as any land area that is saturated or flooded with water, either seasonally or permanently. They can be either inland such as lakes, aquifers and marshes or coastal, as mangroves, estuaries and coral reefs.



We need to conserve wetlands.

64% of the world's wetlands have been degraded since 1900 and degradation continues.

5. 

Wetlands are critical for biodiversity

Wetlands are home to more than 100,000 fresh water species. They are essential for many amphibians, reptiles and migratory birds.

6. 

Wetlands guarantee our food supply

Wetlands provide important food products like fish and rice (20% of the world's nutritional intake).

7. 

Wetlands sustain livelihoods

Wetlands support 61.8 million people that earn their living directly from fishing and aqua-culture.



The Ramsar Convention engages with actors from the public and private sectors to conserve and promote wise use of all wetlands as a contribution to achieving the sustainable development goals on water, climate action and conserving life below water.



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