

# World Wetlands Day 2 Feb



**“For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God’s creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth’s waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins” Patriarch Bartholomew [Source](#)**

World Wetlands Day is celebrated on the 2 February each year and was first celebrated in 1977. It marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) in Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971.

Australia has [66 Ramsar wetlands](#) which means they conserve biological diversity and are on the Ramsar Convention list.

The theme in 2023 is to revive and restore degraded wetlands; **“It's Time for Wetlands Restoration,”** which highlights the urgent need to prioritise wetland restoration.

A wetland is an area of land that is covered or saturated with water on a permanent basis or a seasonal basis. There are many types of wetlands in various environments such as marshes, rice paddies, flood plains, swamps and ponds.

Historically wetlands were seen as wasteland and were drained for developments, but we now realise that not only are they critical as a habitat and breeding ground for many species, but they also filter water and absorb carbon dioxide. We also enjoy many recreational activities in and around wetlands such as fishing, swimming, boating etc.

Wetlands protect our shores from erosion, reduce the impacts of floods, absorb pollutants and improve water quality.



Kakadu National Park  
Yellow Water Billabong  
Photo Gwen Michener

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## Teaching Resources

[Discovering Wetlands in Australia](#) Australian Government, Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water.

[Why wetlands are important?](#) NSW Department of Planning and Environment

[Types of wetlands](#) around the world

[Wetlands Education Toolkit](#) Queensland

[Discovering wetlands in Australia](#) Primary resource

[Wetland Discovery Teachers kit](#) Primary middle years.

[Earthwatch Australia](#) videos

[Wetlands Environmental Education Centre](#) fieldwork tools

[Significance of wetlands to First Nations peoples](#)

[Investigating our local waterway](#) Year 9 Science

[Mangrove Watch](#) Citizen Science Unit for Years 9-12

[Outdoor Learning](#) Years 9 and 10



Yellow Water Billabong, Kakadu National Park  
Photo Gwen Michener



### Did you know?

35% of the world's wetlands have disappeared in the last 50 years. [Source](#)

## Activity Ideas

- Contact your local [Water Watch](#) body to carry out some water quality testing in a wetland or body of water near your school/home/church.
- Make homemade fishing nets with wire clothes hangers and old pantyhose or mesh. Use these to discover what is living in the water near you. Research the animals you find. Can you draw a food chain for this aquatic system?
- Visit a wetland and observe the following: what is the role of the plants living around and in the water? Are there animals you can see in the area?
- Organise an excursion to learn about a wetland.
- Ask students to research and then raise awareness on the importance of wetlands and how to restore them. Make and display posters.
- Discuss how wetlands make our planet more liveable. Talk at assembly about this.
- How do human activities impact wetlands in your local area? Can you carry out some restoration activities?
- Young children can colour in the [World Wetlands Poster](#).

## How can you help?

Look at the [World Wetlands Day](#) website for suggestions on what you can do.

## We would love to hear from you!

Email [Gwen.Michener@caritas.org.au](mailto:Gwen.Michener@caritas.org.au) some pictures with a short explanation to share what your school/parish/family did for "World Wetlands Day"!