

# THE CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUE OF WETLANDS

WETLANDS ENRICH THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

- The scenes and associations of wetlands have contributed in vital ways to the **artistic heritage** of most and perhaps all cultures around the world.
- Cultural values and **community participation** contribute to positive conservation outcomes for internationally designated wetlands.
- The natural beauty and diversity of animal and plant life in many wetlands make them ideal locations for **recreational activities**. This generates significant income that benefits local communities and helps promote the sustainable management of the wetlands concerned.
- While tourism has many potential benefits for conservation, it also can have negative impacts on wildlife and habitats. Development of **tourism infrastructure** within the wetland or immediately around it, such as hotels, restaurants and parking areas, may directly affect the health of a wetland ecosystem, and so too may the uncontrolled presence of people in fragile habitats, which may cause disturbance or damage to wildlife.
- Unsustainable tourism and recreation developments are a significant cause of **wetland loss and degradation** in many countries.
- Wetlands attract diverse recreational uses, generating significant income that benefits local communities and helps promote the sustainable management of the wetlands concerned. But **careful planning** is needed to ensure that visitation rates and activities are ecologically and socially sustainable.
- **Cultural practices and traditions** can play a significant role in securing the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Indigenous and local knowledge as well as citizen scientists are already invaluable resources on the state of wetlands and can be used more.



#ActForWetlands – [www.worldwetlandsday.org](http://www.worldwetlandsday.org)



World  
Wetlands Day  
2 February 2025

Protecting wetlands  
for our common future

