



World Wetlands Day
Monday, 2 February 2015



Wetlands for our Future

Wetlands and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets are a set of 20, time-bound, measurable targets agreed by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. The Aichi Targets are the key elements of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the overarching framework on biodiversity for the entire UN system as recognized by United Nations Resolutions. These targets are presently being translated into revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans by the 194 Parties to the CBD. Achievement of the targets will contribute to reducing, and eventually halting, biodiversity loss at the global level by the middle of the 21st century. In order to safeguard the key role that wetlands, some of the most biodiverse regions on earth, play in our societies and economies, we need to achieve all of the Aichi Targets. Wetlands are relevant to all of the targets and some examples include:

Target 14: *By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.*

Wetlands provide multiple ecosystem services supporting water security and offer a wide range of benefits and values to society and the economy. Values of both coastal and inland wetland ecosystem services are typically higher than for other ecosystem types.

Promoting restoration of degraded wetlands to improve water and food security can be a critical means of ensuring the provision of public goods and addressing poverty (as the rural poor are generally more directly reliant on ecosystem services).

Target 5: *By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.*

Wetlands continue to be lost at an alarming rate. Estimates suggest that 64% have disappeared since 1900 and 87% lost since 1700. Main causes include changes in land use, water diversion (dams, dikes and canalization), infrastructure development, air and water pollution, and excess nutrients.

Target 1: *By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.*

Wetlands are essential in providing water-related ecosystem services, such as clean drinking water, water for agriculture and regulating water quantity (e.g. flood regulation). Wetlands also play a role in erosion control and sediment transport, contribute to land formation and resilience to storms, and provide many water-dependent services, such as agricultural production, fisheries and tourism.



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Target 2: *By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.*

The full value of water and wetlands needs to be recognised and integrated into decision-making in order to meet our future social, economic and environmental needs.

Target 8: *By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.*

Wetlands act as filters and help reduce the nutrient load from fertiliser use and urban waste water and help prevent eutrophication in lakes and streams.

Target 11: *By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.*

Main push is to close the gap in marine protected areas. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, damage to and loss of wetlands is more rapid than that of other ecosystems.

Target 12: *By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.*

Species dependent on both freshwater and coastal wetland are declining faster than those reliant on other ecosystem types, including many migratory species.

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Important links

- Convention on Biological Diversity: www.cbd.int
- Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: www.cbd.int/sp
- CBD Programme of Work on Inland Waters Biodiversity: www.cbd.int/waters
- Global Biodiversity Outlook 4: www.cbd.int/gbo4
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention): www.ramsar.org
- World Wetlands Day 2015: www.worldwetlandsday.org
- Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals:
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>
- Davidson, N. C. 2014. How much wetland has the world lost? Long-term and recent trends in global wetland area. *Marine and Freshwater Research*, 65: 934–941.

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