



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Brief on the Convention on Wetlands for CBD COP16

Wetlands, as defined in the Convention on Wetlands, encompass inland wetlands, marine and coastal wetlands, and human-made wetlands.

Wetlands host exceptional biodiversity. 40% of all the world's species live or breed in wetlands, with inland wetlands alone hosting half of the world's known fish species. Wetlands provide habitat for a wide range of migratory species, as well as rare or endemic species.

Wetlands and their biodiversity sustain people. Inland wetlands provide 40% of the world's fish protein, and more than a billion people depend on inland waters for their livelihoods. Wetlands contribute to keeping drinking water clean and safe, provide water for food crops, and help ensure the safety and wellbeing of people by buffering water extremes. They also help make cities liveable by reducing noise, draining rainwater, moderating the local climate, and providing recreational opportunities.

Wetlands, including the water stored in aquifers and in wetland soils, are an essential part of the world's hydrological cycle. According to the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, 45% of rainfall on land is dependent on evapotranspiration from wetlands and forests. Almost all water used by humans – in households, for irrigation, animal husbandry and industry – is drawn from wetlands.

Wetlands are being degraded and lost at higher rates than other ecosystems, with severe impacts on biodiversity. More than 3 million km² of wetland ecosystems have been lost since 1700 and many wetland types continue to rapidly degrade. One third of inland water species are threatened with extinction, and inland water animal species populations are declining at more than twice the rate observed in terrestrial ecosystems or in the ocean. According to the Living Planet Index the wildlife populations in monitored freshwater ecosystems declined by 85% in the 50 years from 1970 to 2020.

Wetland degradation and loss affects the world's water and climate systems. It pushes the hydrological cycle out of balance, leading to increasing extremes. While healthy wetlands store more carbon in their soil than other ecosystem types, wetland degradation and loss compounds climate change as dry soils do not capture and store carbon.

Protecting, restoring and wisely using wetlands in line with the strategic objectives of the Convention on Wetlands is essential to achieve the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). CBD Decisions [15/6](#) and [15/13](#) recognize that effective implementation of the KMGBF is dependent on leveraging the biodiversity-related conventions, including their science, data and reporting processes as well as existing tools and guidance. [CBD Decision III/21](#) invites the Convention on Wetlands to cooperate as lead partner in the implementation of activities under the CBD related to wetlands. Convention on Wetlands [Resolution XIV.4](#) confirms that implementation of the Convention's [4th Strategic Plan](#) by Contracting Parties and [International Organization Partners](#) is central to achieving the mission of the Convention, as well as contributing to the KMGBF. The [5th Strategic Plan](#) under development for adoption at Convention on Wetlands COP15 in 2025 is being developed in alignment with the KMGBF. Convention on Wetlands [Resolution XIV.6](#), inter alia, calls for an appropriate reflection of wetlands in the indicators and monitoring framework of the KMGBF.

Wetlands are relevant to most Targets of the KMGBF, in relation to reducing threats to biodiversity and meeting people's needs, as well as tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming. Wetlands, and the Convention on Wetlands, are particularly relevant in relation to implementation and monitoring of Target 1, with many wetlands being areas of high biodiversity importance or high ecological integrity, as well as Targets 2 and 3 in relation to restoration and protection of inland water and coastal and marine ecosystems.

Consideration of wetlands in NBSAPs, including incorporation of wetland targets and actions, is key. Cooperation between conventions in implementation of the KMGBF needs national actions by Contracting Parties. Consideration of wetlands in NBSAPs helps consolidate treaty obligations at the planning stage and promotes efficiency in relation to means of implementation including capacity and finance, enhancing effectiveness of actions. It also strengthens monitoring and reporting. Convention on Wetlands [Resolution XIV.6](#), inter alia, encourages Contracting Parties to consider the relevance of their actions to implement the Convention on Wetlands in delivering on commitments under the CBD, taking into account the importance of conserving, restoring, sustainably managing and using wetlands to achieving its goals and targets; and invites Contracting Parties to establish or strengthen national mechanisms to enhance coordination between relevant authorities and to support the mainstreaming of wetlands, their biodiversity, ecosystem functions and contributions to people in NBSAPs and other relevant strategies and plans.

The 6th Joint Work Plan (JWP6) between CBD and the Convention on Wetlands helps align efforts towards achievement of the objectives of both Conventions, enhance cooperation, and maximize the impact of actions, by providing voluntary guidance to Contracting Parties, Convention Bodies and Secretariats. JWP6 was developed building on collaboration between the two conventions under previous Joint Work Plans and is made available to COP 16 in [CBD/COP/16/INF/19](#).

Tools, knowledge products and initiatives under the Convention on Wetlands are available to support planning, implementation and monitoring of the KMGBF. The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Convention on Wetlands has prepared a [briefing note](#) and a [guidance document on scaling up wetland conservation restoration and wise use through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans \(NBSAPs\)](#). The STRP also prepared a [submission](#) to the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators (AHTEG), in which input was provided regarding consideration of wetlands indicators and data flows related to wetlands. A range of [Policy Briefs, Briefing Notes and Technical reports](#) provide technical analysis, information and guidance on topics relevant to wetland protection, restoration and wise use. The [Site Management Toolkit](#) provides guidance on key aspects of managing [Wetlands of International Importance – the world's largest network of protected areas \(as of Oct 2024, 2,522 sites covering 257,317,367 hectares\)](#). The Convention's [Wetland City accreditation](#) scheme (Resolutions XII.10 and XVI.10) enables cities that value their natural or human-made wetlands to gain recognition and positive publicity for their efforts. [World Wetlands Day](#) is celebrated every year on 2 February. The Convention on Wetlands is a global partner in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.



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