

World Wetland Day - 2011

School Activity Kit



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Vanashakti is founded by ordinary citizens who want to do something for India & Indians. We believe that middle class India has to play a role in ensuring proper governance. We need to make people aware that they have a stake in the world around them. We need to help them develop a voice and ensure that it is heard. People have to be informed so that they are aware of the issues that will impact their lives and the lives of those generations who will follow. We believe that if we create informed awareness, people will be able to take a stand on issues that could impact them in the short term and in the long run.

Vanashakti was born because we believe that India can progress only as long as her people are nurtured. Our focus is the environment and the people who depend on the environment for their existence. Environmental degradation threatens the very existence of mankind but those most vulnerable are the poorest of the poor. India can progress only as long as her environment is nurtured. Vanashakti is a platform where like minded people can come together to debate, discuss & campaign to build public awareness. A group of concerned citizens, from all walks of life. Citizens who will raise their voices in protest against the government, big business, politicians or even rapacious builders. Vanashakti is a Public Information Initiative (PII). PIIs have helped open our eyes to a number of issues that would otherwise be swept under the carpet. PIIs seek to inform all the constituents of the interplay between factors so that the lay public can make informed decisions about matters that will impact their lives. We start with creating awareness of major issues. We recognize the need for people to be aware of various developments and changes made by our Government, in the Laws and Legislation that govern us and our country.

Image Courtesy: Internet
Wetland classification Courtesy:
www.wetlandsofindia.org

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What is a Wetland?

Wetlands occur where water and land meet. In simple terms, wetlands are areas where the soil is always wet or wet frequently enough to be populated by plants and animals specially adapted to wet soil conditions.

The Ramsar (More in the next chapter) definition of "wetlands" is a broad one, encompassing not just marshes and lakes, but also coral reefs, peat forests, mangrove swamps, temporary pools, even underground caves, and all sorts of other systems everywhere from the mountains to the sea, including man-made habitats.

Wetlands are of great importance. In fact there is a whole branch of science of dedicated to the learning of wetlands. It is called **Paludology**.

Types of wetlands

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Inland Wetlands | |
| 1. Natural | Lakes/Ponds Ox-bow lakes/ Cut-off meanders Waterlogged (Seasonal) Playas Swamp/marsh |
| 2. Man-made | Reservoirs Tanks Waterlogged Abandoned quarries Ash pond/cooling pond |
| Coastal Wetlands | |
| 1. Natural | Estuary Lagoon Creek Backwater (Kayal) Bay Tidal flat/Split/Bar Coral reef Rocky coast Mangroove forest Salt marsh/marsh vegetation Other vegetation |
| 2. Man-made | Salt pans Aquaculture |

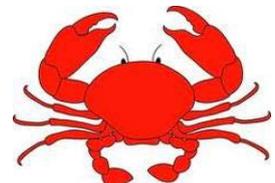
What do wetlands do for me?

Some people think that wetlands are soggy wastelands. They couldn't be more wrong! Wetlands:

- **Protect us from flood waters.** Healthy and stable coastal and river wetlands absorb floodwaters and calm storm surges from hurricanes like Katrina; reducing damage to adjacent properties.
- **Replenish ground water supplies.** Underground water supplies are not unlimited. They must be replenished. Wetlands collect and hold water allowing it to seep through the ground to refill aquifers and wells.
- **Cleanse water.** Clean water is essential! Wetland plants help to clean up our nation's waterways by filtering out sediment and taking up harmful pollutants.



- **Provide homes for wildlife.** Wetlands contribute to biodiversity, providing habitat to more than 40 % of all threatened and endangered plant and animal species.
- **Provide food.** The fish and shellfish you eat for dinner grew up in a wetland. No wetlands, no crab curry!



Ramsar Convention

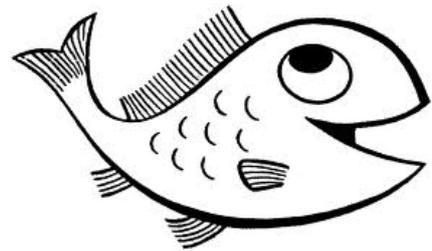
The Ramsar Convention or 'The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat' is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands, i.e., to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

It is named after the town of Ramsar in Iran.



World Wetland Day

2 February each year is celebrated as World Wetlands Day (WWD). It marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. WWD was celebrated for the first time in 1997 and made an encouraging beginning.



Activity for You

Now that you know what wetlands are and what they do for you, you are well equipped to do the following:

Step 1: You have a chart in chapter no. 1 on how wetlands are classified. Go through the chart; pick a wetland which you are most familiar with.

Step 2: Divide the class/participating group of students into study groups (decide the group size depending upon the total number of students participating).

Step 3: Each study group will pick a topic from the **Activity Sheet** and study more on it from their library books, internet etc.

Step 4: Each study group will then make a report in MS-PowerPoint on their chosen topic.

Dos and don'ts for your report:

1. Keep the report in a simple lucid language.
2. Avoid copying blindly from your reference source. Ask your teachers for help on understanding a topic further if you find it difficult to understand.
3. Do not exceed more than 20 slides in your presentation.



Activity Sheet

Topic 1: Plants found in your study area.

- What kind of plants do you find in your study area? Are they known by some specific name?
- Do you see any special adaptations in them? If yes, what are they?
- Name some species of plants in your study area.
- Are these plants of any value to human beings? If yes, can you name some?

Topic 2: Birds found in your study area.

- Name some of the birds that are found in your study area.
- When in the year do you find them? Are they found there throughout the year?
- What special adaptations do you see in them? (Hint: Beak, feet)
- What do they eat?
- What about their habit? Are they found in flocks or do they prefer to be alone?



Topic 3: Animals found in your study area.

- Name some animals that are found in your study area.
- Can you classify them? E.g. into vertebrates, invertebrates and further down the ladder of classification you have learnt in school?
- How are the animals that you have listed important to your study area?
- Can you construct a food chain or food web using these animals?



What Next?

After you have made your presentations submit it to us either by email or by post. Your submissions should reach us by 15th February, 2011. We will go through your presentations and if there is a major error will intimate you about it.

We are dedicating the month of February to wetlands. In that context we will be conducting a wetland day function (we will notify you the date later on). The best presentation(s) from your school will be given a chance to present it there. It will be judged by our keynote personnel and thus awarded the

Vanashakti Junior Wetland Scientist Award!



Good luck and happy learning!!

