



January  
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# Celebrating 50 Years of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands



## The Ramsar Convention

The Ramsar Convention aims to halt the global loss of wetlands and to conserve those that remain through wise use and management.

Worldwide, there are 171 Contracting Parties to the Convention and more than 2,400 listed wetlands of international importance.

## World Wetlands Day

The year 2021 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran. This date is celebrated annually as World Wetlands Day.

## Key points

- Australia listed the world's first wetland of international importance under the Convention.
- Wetlands provide many benefits to people and the environment.
- Australia has Ramsar wetlands in every state and territory, with 66 sites in total.
- You can help by visiting your local wetland, taking part in World Wetlands Day or becoming a citizen scientist.



Cobourg Peninsula, Northern Territory was the world's first Ramsar site (credit Elizabeth McCrudden).

Australia was one of the 5 founding nations to sign the Convention. In 1974 we also designated the world's first Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar wetland) – the Cobourgh Peninsula, in the Northern Territory.

Australia has 66 Ramsar sites covering about 8.3 million hectares. These sites include iconic wetlands such as Kakadu National Park, Roebuck Bay, Gippsland Lakes, Moreton Bay, Blue Lake, Macquarie Marshes and the Coorong.

Australia continues to play an important role helping to manage and implement the Convention, within Australia and internationally.

## Wetlands and water – theme for 2021

The theme for 2021 highlights the role wetlands play in:

- clean water
- water supply
- ecosystem resilience
- sustainable livelihoods and jobs
- biodiversity conservation
- storm protection
- carbon storage
- climate change adaptation
- health and wellbeing
- tourism and recreation.

## Who's involved

The Australian, state and territory governments have laws to protect water, significant wetlands and native plants and animals.

Local government planning controls can also protect local wetlands. Traditional Owners, catchment and conservation groups, and natural resource groups help restore and maintain local wetlands.

Landholders, farmers and conservation land managers contribute to the wise use of wetlands. Local wetland education centres highlight the value of wetlands and encourage visitors to learn more about them.



Get involved in local wetland activities (credit Richmond Landcare).

## How you can help

- Find and visit your nearest Ramsar-listed site and wetland education centre.
- Become a citizen scientist. Help gather vital information about wetlands, and the habitats and biodiversity they support.
- Get involved in local wetland conservation activities. Contact Landcare, catchment management authorities and friends-of groups.
- Take part in World Wetlands Day on 2 February each year.

## More information

Visit our World Wetlands Day page at [environment.gov.au/water/wetlands/world-wetlands-day](https://environment.gov.au/water/wetlands/world-wetlands-day).

