



CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2026

World
Wetlands Day

2 February 2026



Wetlands and traditional knowledge:
Celebrating cultural heritage

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Honouring
World Wetlands Day 2026
- Advocating with
Key campaign messages
- Sharing
Real-world stories
- Communicating with
Campaign materials
- Celebrating through
Engagement



HONOURING WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2026

2

A timeless legacy

Every 2 February, the World Wetlands Day campaign joins people everywhere in recognising the critical importance of our planet's wetlands. These life-sustaining ecosystems bridge past and future and are essential to the continuity of life on Earth.

World Wetlands Day 2026 explores the deep-rooted connections between wetlands and cultural practices, traditions and knowledge systems of communities across the world.

This year's theme is "Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage." The global campaign spotlights the timeless role of traditional knowledge in sustaining wetland ecosystems and preserving cultural identity.

One with wetlands

First celebrated in 1997 and a United Nations International Day since 2022, World Wetlands Day honours the beauty and value of wetlands.

On 2 February 1971, the Convention on Wetlands was signed in Ramsar, Iran, along the shores of the Caspian Sea. It is the oldest of the modern global intergovernmental environmental agreements and remains the only one devoted to a specific ecosystem – wetlands. Today, the 172 countries in its membership, called Contracting Parties, are committed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The Secretariat of the Convention organizes the World Wetlands Day campaign each year, with Contracting Parties taking part. The celebration includes people from all over the world, governments, national and international conservation and sustainability organizations, businesses, non-governmental organizations, media, and youth and other stakeholder groups.

Ours to protect

Extremely productive ecosystems, wetlands provide critical services to people across the globe. Recognised as vital sources of freshwater and food, they're abundant in biodiversity. They serve as critical habitats or breeding areas for many endangered and threatened species, and a wide range of endemic plants and animals depend on specific wetland environments to survive. These ecosystems safeguard humanity against extreme weather by reducing the intensity of waves, absorbing storm surges and buffering tsunamis. They're also highly effective carbon sinks – as peatlands store about 30% of land-based carbon, twice the amount of all the world's forests. Notably, wetlands contribute to job creation and employment, and embody cultural landscapes embedded in identity, art and spirituality.

Yet, wetlands are constantly under threat from human-made factors – from pollution to unsustainable land use to poorly planned infrastructure to climate change. This year's campaign raises awareness of our existential connection to wetlands and underscores the role traditional knowledge plays in the sustainable management, use and protection of these vital ecosystems. Importantly, the campaign celebrates the wealth of ecological understanding passed down through generations.

Life-sustaining

Covering more than 12.1 million square kilometers worldwide – about 6% of the Earth's land surface – wetlands are needed for human survival. In these essential ecosystems, water is the primary factor controlling the environment and plant and animal life. Wetlands may be saltwater or freshwater, inland or coastal, natural or human-made, permanent or temporary, static or flowing. Freshwater wetlands include rivers, lakes, pools, flood plains, peatlands, marshes and swamps. Saltwater wetlands include estuaries, mudflats, saltwater marshes, mangroves, lagoons, coral reefs and shellfish reefs. Human-made wetlands include fishponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and saltponds. All contribute to the wellbeing of our planet and humankind.

**"WHEREVER LAND MEETS WATER, LIFE ABOUNDS.
WETLANDS EXIST IN EVERY CORNER OF THIS
BEAUTIFUL PLANET AND ARE THE ARTERIES AND
VEINS OF THE LANDSCAPE."**

– Dr. Musonda Mumba, Secretary
General of the Convention on Wetlands



ADVOCATING WITH KEY CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

3

Wetlands: Sacred. Life-sustaining. A timeless legacy. Ours to protect.

People have coexisted with wetlands since prehistory, making use of their beneficial services while averting unintended consequences. Over time, a valuable depth of traditional knowledge has been deduced, shared and has subsequently evolved.

The World Wetlands Day 2026 campaign recognises that traditional knowledge bridges wisdom from the past to present and future stewardship of these vital ecosystems.

Three fundamental messages guide this year's campaign communications. We invite you to adapt them for your particular area and to share them widely to encourage participation in World Wetlands Day 2026.

1. Wetlands are essential ecosystems that sustain rich biodiversity and also serve as cradles of cultural heritage and living traditions, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
2. Integrating traditional knowledge into conservation strategies enhances wetland protection and fosters inclusive, community-based approaches that recognise and respect longstanding ecological wisdom.
3. The degradation of wetlands undermines human wellbeing, impacts human rights, and erodes traditional knowledge systems. Immediate and scaled-up action is critical to safeguard cultural heritage and to sustain the traditional knowledge systems that have long protected these highly productive ecosystems.

Wetlands are crucial for ensuring climate stability, water and food security, biodiversity and community resilience. Yet, wetlands are being lost to development faster than they're being restored or protected.

“THE 1,425 MILLION HECTARES OF REMAINING WETLANDS GIVE AN ESTIMATED \$7.98 TRILLION TO \$39.01 TRILLION IN BENEFITS TO PEOPLE, EVERY YEAR.”

– Global Wetland Outlook 2025



SHARING REAL-WORLD STORIES

Culturally rooted practices have helped maintain wetlands' ecological balance and resilience for generations – from ecological monitoring of signs in flora and fauna, to rotational harvesting, to taboos that protect certain species and areas.

We invite you to share your own stories of real-world instances of traditional knowledge that have helped protect and sustainably maintain wetlands. Additionally, we welcome examples of best practices and culturally grounded approaches to wetland management that integrate Indigenous and local knowledge systems.

One way to share these stories is through the social media hashtag #WetlandsWednesday. Simply post on social media on Wednesdays, using #WetlandsWednesday when sharing your experiences. Together, we can recognise the critical role that traditional knowledge has to play – and celebrate the value of cultural heritage.

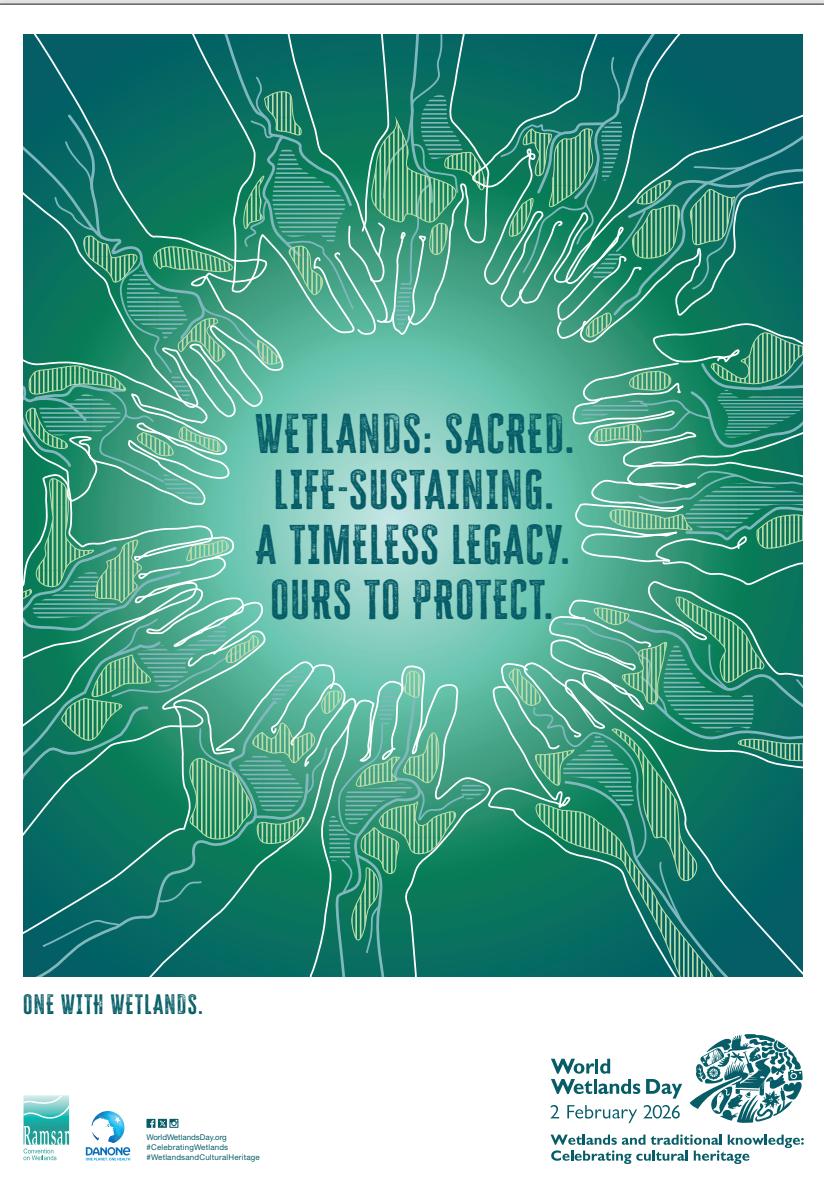
About this year's illustration

The World Wetlands Day 2026 poster blends multiple representations in an effort to capture the richness of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage. It illustrates just how important traditional knowledge is to the world's wetlands and to future generations who will need these essential ecosystems for human wellbeing and planetary health.

The circle of outstretched hands embodies the interconnectedness of all people with wetlands and to one another. Each hand symbolizes our ability to exert influence and to act on behalf of wetlands, while the open palms convey life, hope and our collective future. Flowing through each individual, the wetlands signify traditional knowledge carefully preserved and passed down through generations.

The poster reminds us that wetlands, culture and human wellbeing thrive together when nurtured by traditional knowledge, care and connection.

#WWD2026 | #CelebratingWetlands | #WetlandsandCulturalHeritage

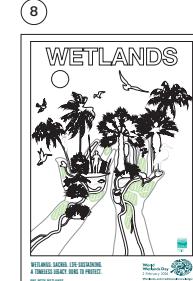
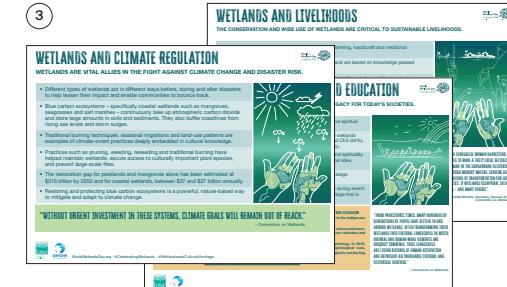
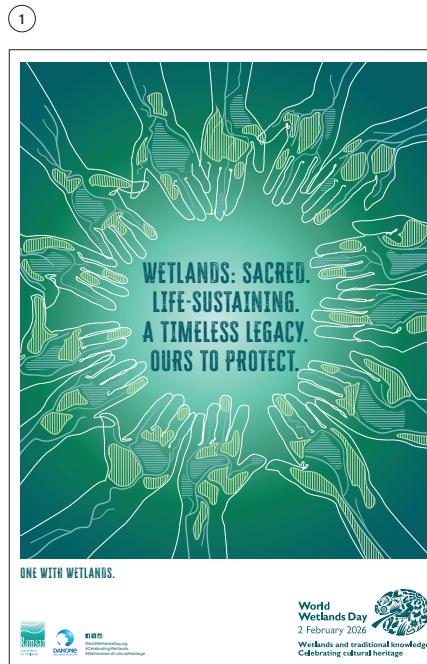


COMMUNICATING WITH CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

5

1 Campaign poster

Illustrates the World Wetlands Day 2026 theme: "Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage"



2 Campaign toolkit

Lays out an overview of World Wetlands Day 2026 and ideas for activities

3 Infographics

Underscore key facts tied to this year's theme:

- Wetlands and Water Resources
- Wetlands, Healthy Ecosystems and Biodiversity
- Wetlands and Climate Regulation
- Wetlands, Job Creation and Upskilling
- Wetlands and Livelihoods
- Wetlands, Culture, Recreation and Education
- Wetlands and Indigenous Peoples

4 PowerPoint presentation

Offers information on traditional knowledge and its role in sustaining wetlands and cultural heritage

5 Social media cards

Deliver visually compelling messages and facts tied to this year's theme

6 Graphic guidelines

Tell how to use the World Wetlands Day 2026 logo, graphics and template page for creating your own materials

7 Branding materials

Provide logos, an email signature and T-shirt

8 Color-in poster

Entertains children while inspiring them to appreciate the value of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge in conserving the world's wetlands

9 Animated video

Celebrates World Wetlands Day 2026



CELEBRATING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

6

From personal choices to community gatherings to educational efforts and advocacy, every day, everywhere, and in some way, all of us can have a positive impact on the future of the world's wetlands.

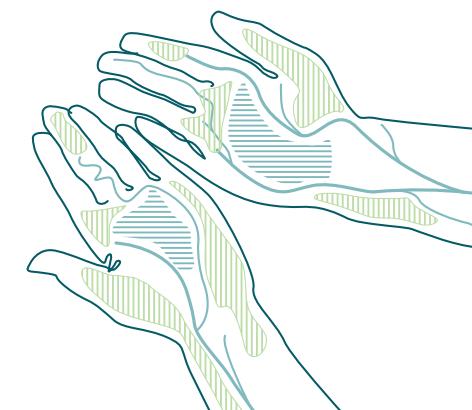
Promote consciousness

- Share the social media cards and infographics across your social media platforms using the hashtags #WWD2026 | #CelebratingWetlands | #WetlandsandCulturalHeritage.
- Download the poster and campaign materials from worldwetlandsday.org and display them on bulletin boards.
- Use this year's designs for your own unique t-shirts, caps and banners – following the WWD 2026 graphic guidelines.
- Localize the WWD 2026 materials, translating them into your language.
- Write articles or submit letters to local newspapers to educate more people.
- Feature interviews on podcasts and/or make videos with community experts to highlight traditional methods that sustain wetland health.



Hold community gatherings

- Facilitate talks about wetland conservation and cultural heritage, featuring speakers with traditional knowledge backgrounds.
- Collaborate with local communities and Indigenous groups to learn and record traditional ecological practices in ways that respect community ownership.
- Host a wetlands-focused event with experts and wetlands-inspired art.
- Organize nature walks or cultural tours that highlight sustainable practices based on traditional knowledge.
- Organize a community ride, run or walk in a wetland setting to promote greater appreciation of these peaceful ecosystems.
- Celebrate the day by organizing a community wetland cleanup to practice stewardship of these hardworking yet vulnerable environments.
- Host a World Wetlands Day press conference to promote local wetland conservation.
- Present a documentary to teach the value of wetlands and the important role of traditional knowledge in their conservation.
- Highlight the beauty of wetlands and their connection to cultural heritage through a planned initiative centered on storytelling, art, photos and/or poetry and prose.
- List your event on the World Wetlands Day 2026 global map and search directory at worldwetlandsday.org.



CELEBRATING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

7

Nurture understanding

- Highlighting the value of traditional knowledge, collaborate with local schools to teach students about the ecological and cultural importance of wetlands:
 - Encourage students to reflect on why wetlands matter.
 - Discuss wetland conservation strategies, identify threats and explore solutions.
 - Engage children through coloring parties and competitions using the WWD 2026 color-in poster while discussing wetland plants and animals.
 - Organize a field trip to local wetlands or to a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site). See <https://rsis.ramsar.org/>.
 - Hold conversations on the benefits wetlands provide to communities and ways to protect them, linking ecological stewardship with cultural heritage.
 - Facilitate mentoring programs tied to wetland conservation and traditional knowledge.

Embrace your role

- Learn and share how wetlands support human wellbeing and cultural heritage.
- Appreciate the value of wetlands and recognise threats from human activity.
- Make conscious choices to prevent wetland loss and degradation.
- Support wetland restoration at local, regional and national levels and participate in community restoration projects and other field activities.
- Live a low-impact lifestyle: conserve water, eat foods that are sustainable, avoid toxic products that could flow into wetlands, and properly dispose of waste.
- Advocate for policies recognising traditional knowledge in wetland management.
- Participate in public hearings to ensure Indigenous and local voices are heard in wetland conservation planning.
- Team with others and advocate for wetland conservation in sustainable development and climate initiatives at all government levels.
- Support initiatives that document, protect and apply traditional ecological knowledge responsibly.

