

Wetlands of Queensland

Book and online resources to highlight the beauty and accessibility of Queensland's wetlands

Queensland has more types of wetlands than any other state in Australia.

The beauty of these valuable ecosystems and why their protection and wise use is vital will be demonstrated through a new book, *Wetlands of Queensland*. In addition, an online guide of wetlands to visit across the state and regionally-specific information will be made available.

These resources are being developed as part of the Wetlands of Queensland project by the Queensland Wetlands Program (QWP) and the Queensland Museum.

Background

Wetlands are “areas of permanent or periodic/intermittent inundation with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt.” Put simply, almost anywhere that can be wet is a wetland, as long as it has plants, animals or soil types that are adapted to wet conditions.

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rainforests. While covering only 6 per cent of the Earth's surface (approximately 4.1 per cent of Queensland), wetlands provide a number of ecosystem services that benefit, sustain and support the environmental, social and economic well-being of people.

Diversity and importance

While wetlands are often thought of as swamps, they also include rivers, lakes, estuaries, and subterranean and marine areas.

Human life is dependent on water, so it's not surprising that we are drawn to living close to water with property prices reflecting the importance we place on being close to a wetland. The different types of wetlands and the role they play in our wellbeing is something we often take for granted.

Coastal wetlands trap and stabilise sediments to lessen the effects of floodwaters and tidal movements. They also collect and process nutrients and contaminants from run-off and help maintain water quality.



The *Wetlands of Queensland* book will highlight the beauty and importance of wetlands.

Australia's coastal wetland ecosystems (mangroves, saltmarsh and seagrasses) capture significant amounts of carbon both in their soils and plant matter (Blue Carbon).

Wetlands supply resources such as food, medicine and tools for First Nations people as well as being critically important for plants and animals, including threatened species such as the dugong, wallum sedge frog and loggerhead turtle.

Rare plants such as the feather palm and the blue tassel fern are only found in Queensland's wetlands.

Migratory shorebirds visit Queensland's wetlands every year from as far away as China, Alaska and Siberia.

Wetlands of Queensland by area

Queensland's wetlands are truly vast and varied. From Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) and K'gari (Fraser Island) with their freshwater sand lakes, to the large floodplain wetlands of the Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre basin, and the extensive estuarine wetlands of the Great Barrier Reef and the Gulf.

The QWP will work together with its regional network partners to identify opportunities for collecting photographs and other material. Nobody knows a wetland better than the people who live and work around it.



Queensland's wetlands are diverse, from the coastal wet tropics to the semi-arid channel country. Photograph Gary Cranitch © Queensland Museum.

Regional wetlands to visit

One of the key outcomes of this project will be to highlight regional wetlands that can be visited by local communities and tourists. An easy-to-use online digital platform and regionally-specific resources will be developed to encourage people to visit these wonderful places.



Cattana Wetlands, Cairns.
Photograph Gary Cranitch © Queensland Museum



Currawinya Lakes host over 200 bird species with counts of over 100,000 individual birds recorded.

International importance

In 1971, representatives from 18 nations, including Australia, met in the Iranian city of Ramsar to sign the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, known as the Ramsar Convention.

The Ramsar Convention encourages the designation of sites containing representative, rare or unique wetlands, or wetlands that are important for conserving biological diversity. Sites support large numbers of waterbirds and or threatened species, exhibit other biodiversity or have unusual landscapes.

Queensland has five wetlands listed by the Ramsar Convention and these will be a major focus of the book. All of these wetlands can be visited, except parts of Shoalwater Bay which are managed by the Department of Defence.

Get involved

Email wetlands@des.qld.gov.au to find out more.

The Queensland Wetlands Program supports projects and activities that result in long-term benefits to the sustainable management, wise use and protection of wetlands in Queensland. The tools developed by the Program help wetlands landholders, managers and decision makers in government and industry. The Queensland Wetlands Program is currently funded by the Queensland Government.

Contact wetlands@des.qld.gov.au
or visit www.wetlandinfo.des.qld.gov.au

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