

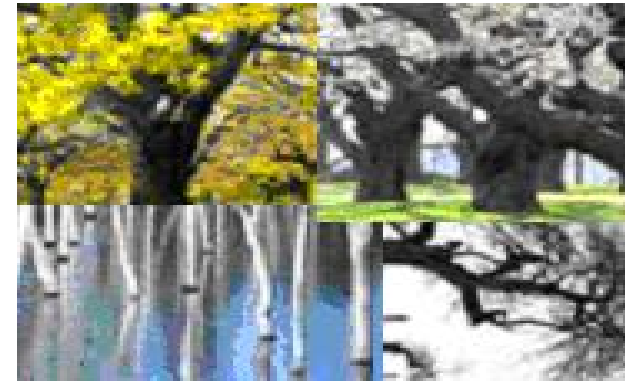
- ✚ The 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is one of the world's first global conservation treaties and the only global instrument in force dealing with water resources.
- ✚ The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 144 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 1401 wetland sites, totalling 122.8 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.
- ✚ Between 1900 and 1995, human water withdrawals increased by a factor of more than six, which is more than twice the rate of population growth
- ✚ In 1995, some 41% of the world's population, or 2.3 billion people, inhabited river basins under water stress.
- ✚ 82 of 114 watersheds studied world-wide have less than 5% of their land area under national protection
- ✚ 1 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water
- ✚ 2.3 billion people currently live around rivers where there are frequent water shortage and 1.7 billion of these people live in areas where water is scarce
- ✚ 3 million die each year, many of them children, from illnesses caused by contaminated water
- ✚ In 20th century we destroyed 50% of the world's remaining wetlands

## Wetlands in Parliament

- ✚ There is no specific wetlands legislation in Ontario or Canada. Wetlands receive indirect protection through Ontario's Planning Act, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, Municipal Act, Endangered Species Act, Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act, Conservation Land Tax Act, Conservation Authorities Act, Environmental Assessment Act, and Ontario Water Resources Act.
- ✚ Wetlands are also specifically recognized in the natural heritage protection measures of Ontario's Planning Act.
- ✚ At the federal level, the Canada Wildlife Act, Fisheries Act, Migratory Birds Convention Act, and Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, provide some protection to wetlands through species and habitat conservation measures.
- ✚ However, other legislations, such as the provincial Drainage Act, still work against wetland conservation by permitting wetland drainage for agricultural purposes.
- ✚ In most cases, the installation of municipal drains significantly alters the local water cycle, resulting in dramatic changes to wetland area and function.

'In the face of poverty....  
wetlands are lifelines'

## Wetlands in Ontario



Wetlands	of	Ontario
Name of Wetland	Area (ha.)	Date Since Was created
Long Point	3,730	24/05/82
St. Claire	244	06/10/85
Southern James Bay	25290	27/05/87
Polar Bear Provincial park	2408	27/05/87
Point Pelee	1564	27/05/87
Mer Bleue Conservation Area	3343	26/09/95
Matchedash Bay Provincial Wildlife Area	1840	31/10/96
Minesing Swamp	6000	31/10/96

# Canada and Ontario in the World of Wetlands



World Wetlands Day 2006

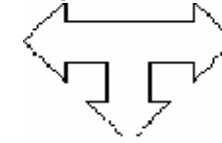
February 2

Dr. Paresh Pandya  
Hindu Mandir Windsor  
And  
Faculty of Education  
University of Windsor

'In the face of poverty....  
wetlands are lifelines'

- ✚ Canada is a huge, beautiful and diverse country, Canada is second largest country in the world, with an Area 9,984,070 Km<sup>2</sup>
- ✚ Canada holds over 25% of the world's Wetlands. Like rainforests and coral reefs wetlands are some of the richest plant and wildlife habitats in the world!
- ✚ Wetlands are up there with tropical rainforests for their productivity. They are found all over the world—the only continent that does not have wetlands is Antarctica. Canada is fortunate to be home to more than 1,270,000 square kilometres (127 million hectares) of wetlands. That's nearly 25 per cent of all the wetlands on Earth!
- ✚ Canada holds over 20% of the world's fresh water. Its longest river, the Mackenzie, stretches 4241 Km.
- ✚ The convention on wetlands came into force for Canada on 15 May 1981. Canada presently has 36 sites designated as wetlands of international importance, with a surface area of 13,051,501 hectares
- ✚ Ontario presently has 8 sites out of 36 sites designated as wetlands of international Importance with surface area of 54,419 hectares. (0.42% of total area of Canada).
- ✚ Unfortunately, wetland loss continues in Canada. As much as 70 per cent of Canada's original wetlands have been lost in some areas of the country. That's why we have to work to conserve, restore and manage Canada's wetlands for waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

... Did you know...?



- ✚ Canada is home to nearly 25 per cent of all the wetlands on Earth. In fact, about 14 per cent of Canada's total area is covered in wetlands. While that may seem like a lot, the fact is that wetlands continue to disappear every day.
- ✚ Wetlands naturally filter water resources, improving the quality of the water Canadians drink and use every day.
- ✚ Wetlands act like giant sponges, slowing the flow of surface water, reducing the impact of flooding and recharging groundwater supplies.
- ✚ Wetlands and vegetation form buffers that separate land-use activities (such as agriculture) from water bodies.
- ✚ Wetlands have the potential to remove and store greenhouse gases from the Earth's atmosphere.
- ✚ Wetlands help to prevent soil erosion.
- ✚ Wetlands are a key link in the water system chain. Canadians have made it clear that water is one of our most important environmental issues. Wetland and water conservation is critical if we want to keep our water healthy. The next time you take a drink of water, think about how Canada's wetlands help to keep our water clean.
- ✚ Wetlands are a vital part of our environment. Unfortunately, when people think of wetlands, many think of them as wastelands. This couldn't be further from the truth.