

# Wetlands in a nutshell

“Wetlands provide essential services for nature and people. They provide water for consumption, protect us from floods, store carbon and other functions critical to achieve sustainable development. Yet, wetlands are under threat and are being lost faster than any other ecosystem mainly due to land use conversion, water diversion and infrastructure development. I invite you to take action to conserve, sustainably use and restore this vital ecosystem.”

Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

## Why Wetlands are important?

1. 

**Wetlands ensure fresh water for all of us**

Wetlands provide us with drinking water. Only 0,75% of the world's fresh water is accessible for direct human uses. The UN estimates that 2 billion people will not have access to safe drinking water by 2025.

2. 

**Wetlands filter harmful waste from water**

80% of wastewater is discharged into the natural environment without any form of treatment. The abundant plant life in wetlands absorbs waste, which helps purify water.

3. 

**Wetlands store carbon**

Peatlands alone hold 30% of all carbon stored on land. This is twice the amount stored in the world's forests, providing resilience against climate change.

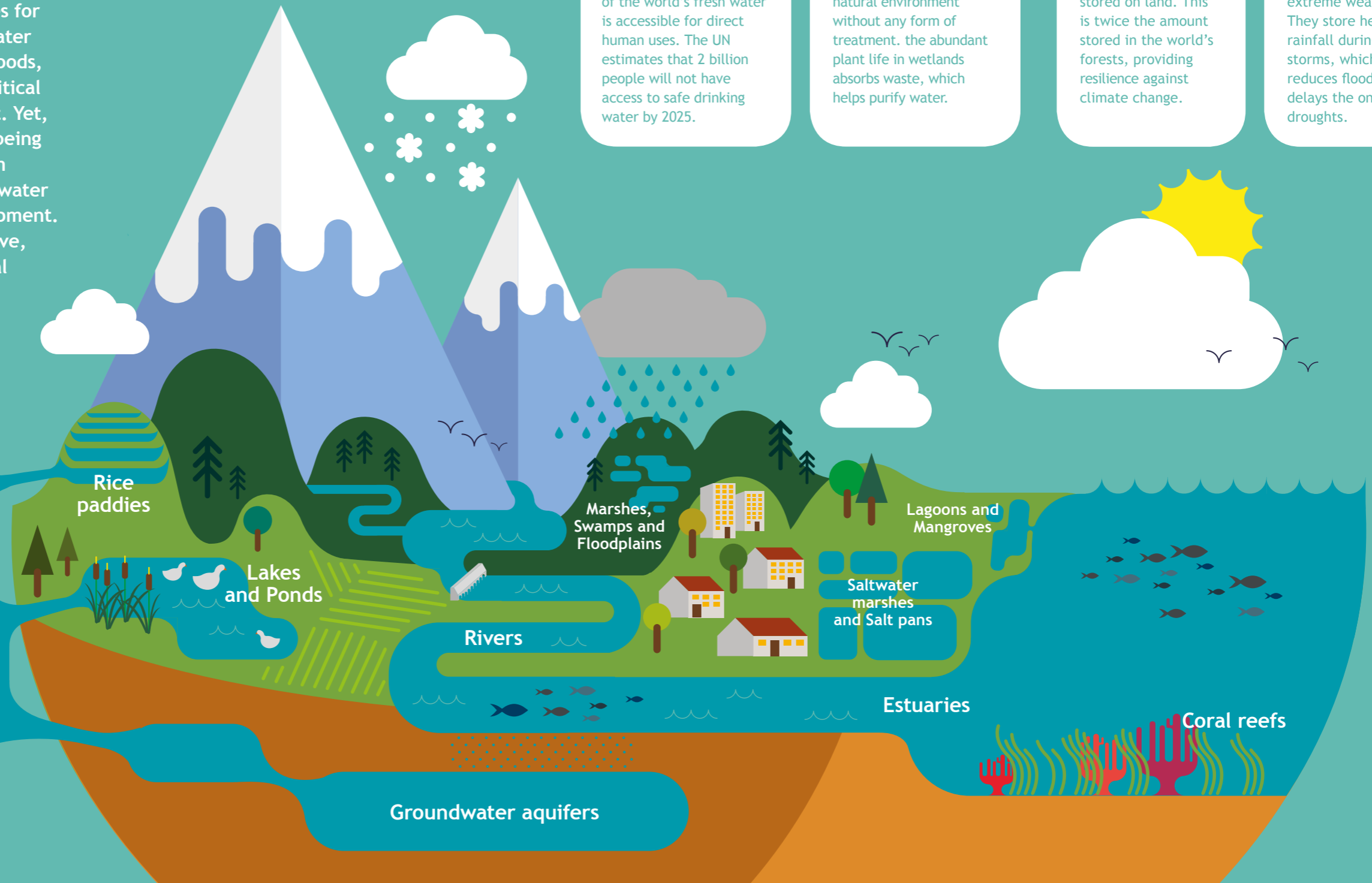
4. 

**Wetlands are nature's shock absorbers**

Wetlands are a natural buffer during extreme weather. They store heavy rainfall during storms, which reduces flooding and delays the onset of droughts.

## What are Wetlands?

A wetland is defined as any land area that is saturated or flooded with water, either seasonally or permanently. They can be either inland such as lakes, aquifers and marshes or coastal, as mangroves, estuaries and coral reefs.



## We need to conserve wetlands.

64% of the world's wetlands have been degraded since 1900 and degradation continues.

5. 

**Wetlands are critical for biodiversity**

Wetlands are home to more than 100,000 fresh water species. They are essential for many amphibians, reptiles and migratory birds.

6. 

**Wetlands guarantee our food supply**

Wetlands provide important food products like fish and rice (20% of the world's nutritional intake).

7. 

**Wetlands sustain livelihoods**

Wetlands support 61.8 million people that earn their living directly from fishing and aqua-culture.