



# WETLANDS FACT SHEET # 1

## Wetlands Protection - Overview

Over the past few years, the issue of wetlands protection seems to come up everywhere you turn. It's in the newspapers and on T.V. and radio news and talk shows.

### Why all the fuss?

Wetlands are, by definition, transitional areas between open water and dry land. The "natural" values of these wet areas have historically competed with their value as "dry" land where they can be converted for other purposes such as developments or agriculture. The water may not be on the surface all the time, making it hard to "know" it when you see it."

However, wetlands are generally extremely valuable and produc-



tive ecosystems. They are home to many beautiful and rare species. They are the source of many commercially and recreationally valuable species of fish, shellfish and wildlife. They retain flood waters and protect shorelines from erosion. Wetlands filter runoff and adjacent surface waters to protect the quality of our lakes, bays and rivers. Wet-



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lands also protect many of our sources of drinking water. And wetlands provide varied recreational opportunities throughout the country.

EPA knows that there is confusion about wetlands and programs that protect them.

This collection of fact sheets is designed to offer some basic information about wetlands and the programs that affect them. If you would like more information, please contact the sources identified within. And remember, the EPA WETLANDS HOTLINE\* is there for everyone at:

**1-800-832-7828**



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