

Wildlife of Wetlands

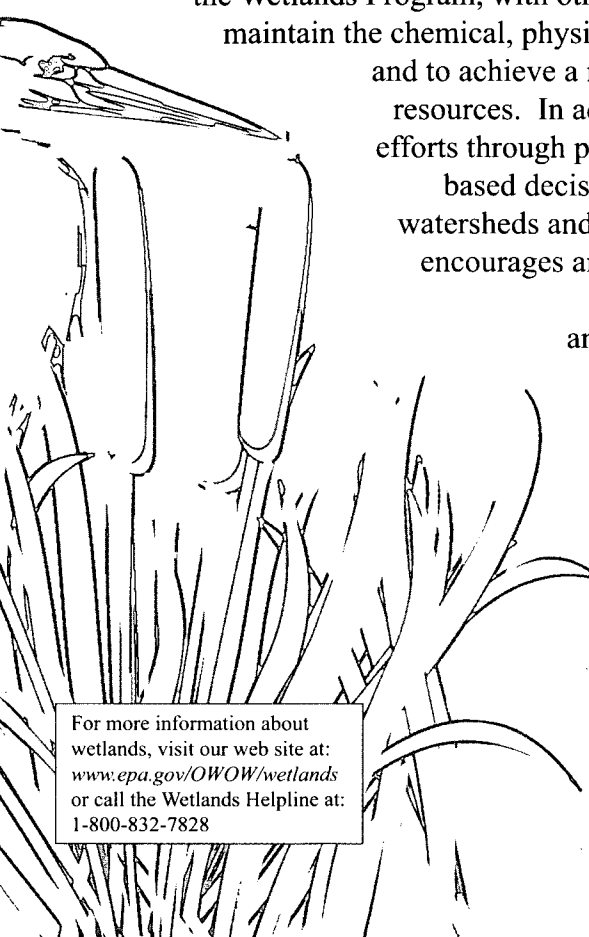


2004



Wetlands Program

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



The EPA's Wetlands Program works to protect and restore our Nation's aquatic resources with other federal agencies, state, tribal, and local governments, and non-governmental partners. Through implementation of the Clean Water Act the Wetlands Program, with other programs in the Office of Water, seeks to maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Nation's waters and to achieve a no net loss of wetlands and other valuable aquatic resources. In addition, the Program promotes wetland protection efforts through partnerships, education, grants, and sound science-based decision making to improve the quality of the Nation's watersheds and aquatic ecosystems. The Wetlands Program also encourages and enables others, in concert with meeting federal Clean Water Act responsibilities, to protect and restore the functions and values of the Nation's wetlands and associated aquatic ecosystems.

The photographs presented for each month were Finalists in EPA's 2003 Wetland Photography Contest; the small thumbnail photos received honorable mention. Photographs of a wide range of wildlife species that live in, or depend on, wetlands were submitted by amateur photographers from across the country.

For more information about wetlands, visit our web site at: www.epa.gov/OWOW/wetlands or call the Wetlands Helpline at: 1-800-832-7828

Cover photo: Jay Fleming
Grand Prize 2003 Wetland Photo Contest
Great Egret, Indian River Bay, DE



"All Paths Lead to Light" by Natalie Hamill, age 17
New Jersey.
2000 National Art Finalist, *River of Words* Contest.

Schoolchildren around the country are learning to explore and value the natural world through the annual River of Words Watershed Poetry and Art Contest, which is affiliated with the Library of Congress.

Heron

*High
on two silver legs
blue ice cream
tipped wings
stretching
golden vanilla
beak,
creamy white neck
bent over shimmering
water
silky smooth
peach fuzz wings
flooded
with a perfect
golden
ray of light
even stars
back away at its beauty.*

Abigail Hemenway, Grade 5
Pennsylvania
1997 Poetry Finalist
River of Words Contest

<http://www.riverofwords.org/>





Jack Mills

Snow Geese at dawn, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, NM

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge is famous for its wetlands, which are critically important for migrating birds in the desert southwest. Thousands of birds, including snow geese and a wide variety of other waterfowl, gather here to feed during the winter months.

JANUARY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

DECEMBER

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FEBRUARY

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John Pickles

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New Year's Day

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day



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"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." William Shakespeare

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Gary Armstrong
Mallards, Green Bay, WI

The United States, Canada, and Mexico are all signatories to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a federal initiative to restore millions of acres of wetlands essential for wintering and nesting ducks, including Mallards. In support of the Management Plan, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act has protected and restored almost 16 million acres of wetlands and adjacent uplands in North America since 1989.

FEBRUARY

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Bill Best

"When the well is dry we know the wealth of water." Benjamin Franklin

For more information about wetlands visit our website at: www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/ or call 1-800-832-7828



Jay Osenkowski
American Toad, Richmond, RI

Amphibians, such as the American Toad, are voracious eaters of insects. Vernal pools - small seasonal wetlands that contain surface water for only a few weeks in the spring - are especially important as they provide critical breeding habitat for many species of toads and other amphibians.

MARCH

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



Lane Lefort

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Pelican Island National
Wildlife Refuge - 1903

Vernal Equinox



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FEBRUARY

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"The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful." e.e. cummings

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Robert Sofferman
Mallard on nest, Burlington Golf Course, VT

Wetlands is the collective term for marshes, swamps, bogs, and similar aquatic areas. Often called “nurseries of life,” wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems on earth, comparable to tropical rain forests and coral reefs. Due to this productivity, wetlands provide an abundant source of food for more than 15 million ducks in the United States.



Annette Jones, Esq.
Green Tree Frog, Lake Waco, TX

This Green Tree Frog found a suitable home in a constructed wetland in Waco, Texas. The wetland was specifically created to improve water quality in the Waco River, the source of the city's drinking water. Recent research has found that in certain watersheds, nitrogen and herbicide runoff can be reduced by up to 50 percent by restoring wetlands in just 1 percent of the watershed.

MAY

May is American Wetlands Month

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

For more information about
American Wetlands Month
visit our web site at:
www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm

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JUNE
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Jennie Sauer

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Paul Wallace

Memorial Day

Lewis and Clark
starts-1804

"It is only a little planet, but how beautiful it is." Robinson Jeffers

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John Karian
Great Blue Heron in nest, Sandy Creek Township, PA

One of the most significant benefits of wetlands is their ability to store immense quantities of floodwater and slowly release it over time, providing a natural buffer against destructive floods. Great Blue Herons also find value in wetlands as they often build their nests in or near swamps.

JUNE

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	Flag Day					
	Summer Solstice					

"In order to see birds it is necessary to become a part of the silence." Robert Lynd

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Mary Hollinger
Dragonfly, St. Mary's County, MD

Dragonflies provide a natural control of mosquito populations. Healthy wetlands can support large numbers of dragonfly nymphs, which prey upon mosquito larvae. As adults, dragonflies have a voracious appetite for flying mosquitoes, hence their nickname "mosquito hawk." Monitoring wetlands for water quality using bioindicators, such as dragonflies and other aquatic insects, is helping to determine the health of these important aquatic ecosystems.

JULY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

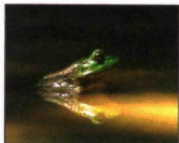
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Mundy Hackett

JUNE
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AUGUST
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"When we try to pick out anything by itself in nature we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." John Muir

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Jay Osenkowski
Gray Tree Frog, South Kingstown, RI

Wetlands are the vital link between land and water, and provide critical habitats for amphibians such as the Gray Tree Frog. Perhaps the world's best natural filter, wetlands break down and remove excess nutrients, sediment, and other contaminants in surface runoff. This acts to reduce the amount of pollutants reaching our rivers, lakes, and estuaries, as well as groundwater and drinking water sources.

AUGUST

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Carl Berg

JULY

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"I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a sanctum sanctorum. There is the strength, the marrow, of Nature."
Henry David Thoreau

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Alan Savitzky
Marbled Salamander, Isle of Wight County, VA

The Marbled Salamander is typically found in floodplains and other low-lying areas. As adults, salamanders live on land but all salamanders are born in wetlands, such as vernal pools, which are critical to their existence.

SEPTEMBER

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Labor Day



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Autumnal Equinox

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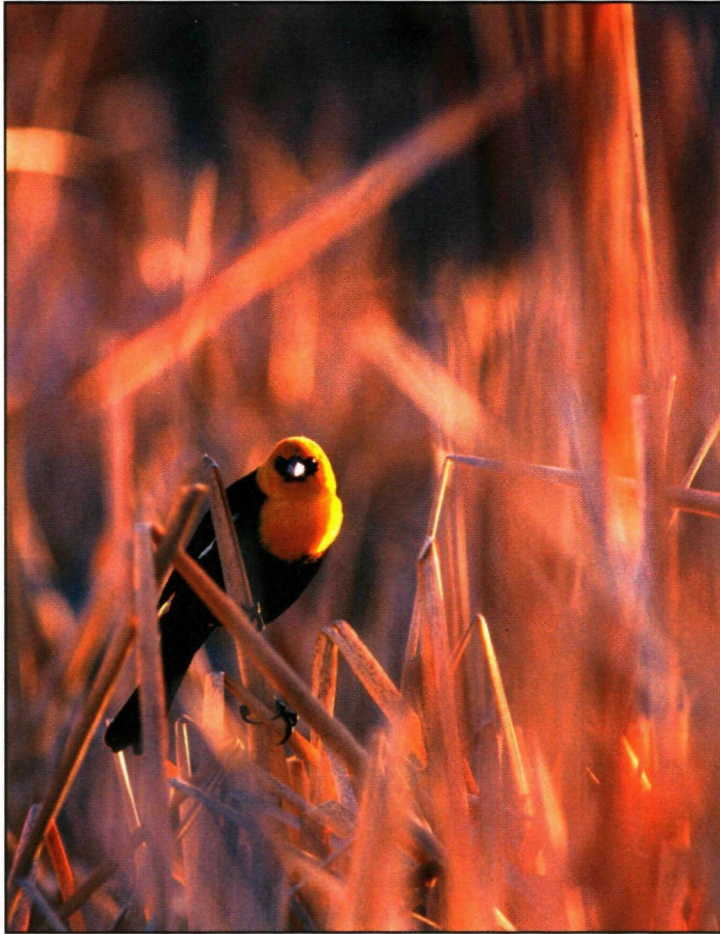
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L.A. Dils

"For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another might be lost, until the whole of things will vanish by piecemeal."
Thomas Jefferson

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Paul Gibson
Yellow-headed Blackbird, Nampa, ID

Wetlands provide excellent homes for all types of wildlife, including the Yellow-headed Blackbird and other songbirds. Even small wetlands are important as they provide a crucial source of food, as well as resting areas, for birds on their annual migration.

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Jay O'Brien

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Columbus Day



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Clean Water Act-1972



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"I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order." John Burroughs

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W.B. Folsom

Florida Panther, Everglades National Park, FL

More than one-third of the threatened and endangered species in the U.S. live exclusively in wetlands, and nearly half use wetlands at some point in their life cycle. The Everglades, a unique ecosystem and home to the endangered Florida Panther, has been designated a World Heritage Site and a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations.

NOVEMBER

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Dennis Demcheck

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"We have lost a sense of respect for the wild river, for the complex workings of a wetland, for the intricate web of life that water supports." Sandra Postel

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Dennis Demcheck
American Alligator, Lafayette, LA

Wetlands are crucial components of watersheds, providing numerous functions, or services, for both people and wildlife, including this lurking American alligator. Some of these functions include: protecting and improving water quality, providing habitats for plants and animals, storing floodwater, and maintaining surface water flow during dry periods. In addition, 95% of the commercially harvested fish and shellfish in the U.S. are directly dependent on wetlands, hence the saying “no wetlands, no seafood.”

DECEMBER

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North American Wetlands
Conservation Act-1989



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Winter Solstice

Christmas

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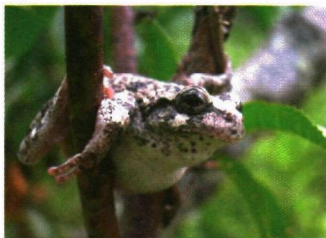
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William B. Folsom

"To protect your rivers, protect your mountains." Emperor Yu

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The above photographs were Finalists in EPA's 2003 Wetland Photography Contest.
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