What is a Wetland?

A wetland is any place where soil remains wet for long periods. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, river edges, floodplains, springs, and seasonal wetlands. They provide clean water, prevent floods, improve soils, support fish and wildlife, and recharge groundwater.

Signs You Are in a Wetland



Soft or Spongy Ground
Water may be visible or just below the surface.



Water-Loving Plants
Papyrus, Reeds, Arrowroot, Cattails.



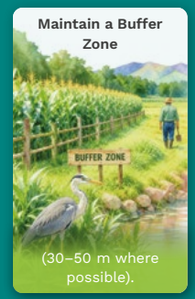
Dark, Clay-Like Soils
Mottled or Gleyed Earth.



Abundant Wildlife
Birds, Frogs, Insects, Nature Sounds.

Protecting Wetlands: Simple Actions

It is important to protect wetlands because they give us clean water, reduce floods, support farming and fishing, and provide homes for many plants and animals.



PROTECT WETLANDS FOR PEOPLE & NATURE!

Restoring a Damaged Wetland

Restoring degraded wetlands is important because it brings back clean water, protects us from floods, and supports plants, animals, and livelihoods.

How to Restore Wetlands



RESTORE WETLANDS FOR WATER, WILDLIFE, AND PEOPLE!

Building a Brushwood Water Control Weir for Wetland Restoration

Restoring Water Levels in a Drained Wetland



Building a Sandbag Water Control Weir for Wetland Restoration

Restoring Water Levels in a Drained Wetland



Good Management Practices



Sustainable Grazing
Manage livestock for healthy wetlands.



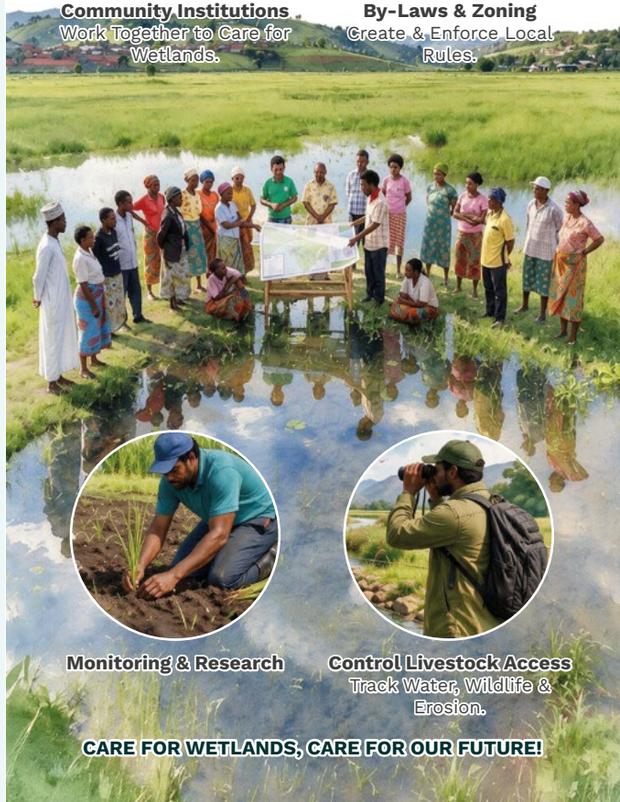
Wetland-Friendly Farming
Use reduced tillage, organic methods, shallow canals, and growing shallow-rotted crops.



Community Institutions
Work Together to Care for Wetlands.



By-Laws & Zoning
Create & Enforce Local Rules.



Monitoring & Research

Control Livestock Access
Track Water, Wildlife & Erosion.

CARE FOR WETLANDS, CARE FOR OUR FUTURE!

Rotational Grazing Area
(Seasonally Dry Grazing Pasture)

Fenced Off Permanent Wetland
(No Grazing)



Vegetable Farming Area
(Shallow Irrigation Canals)

Fenced Off Permanent Wetland
(No Entry)



DOs and DON'Ts

DOs
(What You Should Do)

- Keep a natural buffer zone (30–50 m where possible) around the wetland.
- Use sustainable grazing—rotate grazing areas and keep animals away from permanently wet zones.
- Use wetland-friendly farming such as reduced tillage, organic methods, shallow canals, and growing crops in safe zones only.
- Allow natural water flow, keep channels, inlets, and outlets open.
- Replant native vegetation (papyrus, reeds, sedges, shrubs).
- Prevent pollution, dispose of waste properly and keep chemicals away.
- Report or repair damage such as erosion, blocked channels, or illegal drainage.
- Form or join wetland committees to monitor and guide use.
- Follow and respect by-laws and zoning rules.
- Monitor water levels, plants, animals, and erosion regularly.



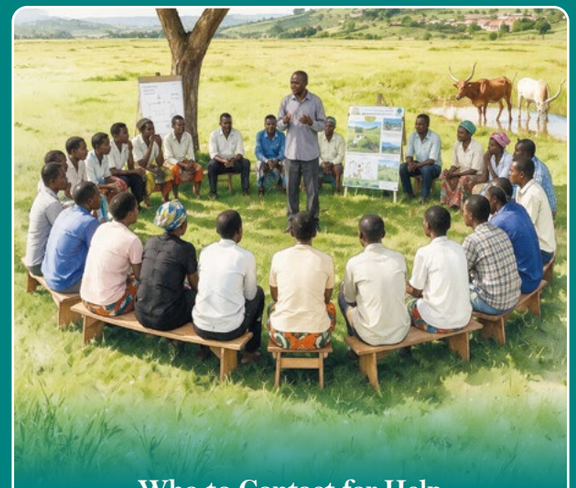
DON'Ts
(What You Should Avoid)

- Do NOT cultivate or build too close to the wetland edge.
- Do NOT allow livestock to enter and trample waterlogged or sensitive areas.
- Do NOT do intensive farming inside the wetland or create deep/large drainage canals for agriculture.
- Do NOT block or divert water with mounds, ditches, or drainage canals.
- Do NOT plant invasive species such as eucalyptus in or near the wetland.
- Do NOT dump waste, chemicals, or fertilizers into or near the wetland.
- Do NOT burn wetland vegetation—fire destroys wildlife and soil health.
- Do NOT allow unregulated use without community agreements or by-laws.
- Do NOT ignore rules, boundaries, or conservation zones.
- Do NOT assume the wetland is fine, lack of monitoring leads to degradation.



Handling Conflicts Fairly

Handle wetland conflicts fairly by sharing information openly, involving women, youth, elders, and all user groups in decision-making, documenting agreements clearly, using neutral mediators when needed, and following community by-laws and agreed rules. Encourage respectful dialogue, listen to all sides, and resolve issues in ways that strengthen unity and protect the wetland for everyone



Who to Contact for Help

- County Environment Office
- NEMA officers
- WRUA (Water Resource Users Associations)
- Local conservation NGOs (ICF, WWANC...)
- Community forest associations
- Agricultural extension officers

The Nature Conservancy

Community Practical Field Guide for Wetlands



PROTECTION • RESTORATION • MANAGEMENT