

The Importance of Wetlands

Wetlands in the US are declining by a rate of 386-772 square miles per year. Why do we care? Well, there are many benefits to wetlands including:

- Wetlands provide habitat for both plants and animals
 - 1/3 of all N. American birds rely on wetland habitats for some reason
 - 26% plants on threatened or endangered lists are somehow dependent on wetlands
- -Wetlands are important in flood prevention
 - depressions hold water when there is heavy precipitation
 - upstream wetlands catch and hold runoff
- -Wetlands can help prevent pollution from degrading water quality
 - can capture and remove pollutants from runoff
- -Wetlands have unique plant populations
 - plants adapted to living in saturated soils devoid of oxygen
- -Wetlands have a high level of productivity
 - they are one of the most productive ecosystems because of their dense vegetation
- -Wetlands are an important aspect to some human economic activities
 - 95% commercially harvested fish and shellfish spend part of their life in wetlands
- -Wetlands can provide habitats for recreation, education and research



Male Redwing Blackbird on a Cattail-
<http://www.bentler.us/eastern-washington/animals/birds/red-winged-blackbird.aspx>

Fragmentation:

It has been found that wetland fragmentation affects bird, amphibian, and many other animal populations. Daub (1993) found that many bird species in North America require a wetland larger than 1 hectare. Hudson Crossing Park's pocket wetland, after it was fragmented from the larger wetland across the play garden, is approximately 0.1 acres, or 0.04 hectares. Additionally, plant diversity has been found to be higher in larger wetlands. The bird's-eye primrose (*Primula farinose*), a common wetland specialist in Switzerland, was found to be sensitive to habitat fragmentation (Lienert and Fischer, 2003).