Coloring Template for Ages 6-18

This contest focuses on wetland conservation! Use the fact sheet and your imagination to create your artwork. There are no limits on what you can draw if it relates to wetlands - wetland animals, plants, people, scenes, or your own idea! Create original, hand-drawn artwork using traditional art materials only. No AI or digital artwork. Don't forget to answer the conservation question when you submit your artwork by December 31, 2026, at **www.conservewithcrayons.org**. Have fun and be creative!

FREE to enter – $1,500 of prizes – New contests every three months

Wetland Conservation Fact Sheet

Hey everyone! This contest is about wetlands and all the great things that they do for our planet. There are many types of wetlands which are home to all sorts of plants and animals. Read below to find out more about wetlands.

What is a Wetland?

The neat thing about wetlands is they are easy to define; a wetland is land that is wet! More specifically, a wetland is anywhere that the soil is saturated or covered by shallow water for at least part of the year. There are thousands of specific wetlands, but they fall into four major categories.

Marshes - Periodically or continuously covered with water and have soft stemmed plants like grasses and cattails

Swamps - Mainly supplied with water on the surface and contain more woody vegetation like trees and shrubs

Bogs - Entirely rainwater supplied, they are acidic with poor nutrient levels. Often covered in moss

Fens - Groundwater fed, covered by sedges, reeds, and grasses

Where are Wetlands located?

Wetlands exist on every continent other than Antarctica. They make up around 6% of our planet's land mass. The largest wetland in the world is the West Siberian Lowland and is located in Russia. It covers over 1 million square miles! North America is home to many different types of wetlands including the very important Prairie Pothole Region or PPR which stretches from the Midwest up into Canada. The PPR provides important breeding habitat for almost 50 percent of North America's **waterfowl**.

Why are Wetlands important?

Nearly 40% of the Earth's species of plants and animals use wetlands at some point in their life. Here in the U.S., about half of the **endangered species** depend on them. Unfortunately, many wetlands are in danger. Below are a few of the ways that wetlands are either degraded or destroyed.

Draining - Humans drain wetlands and fill them to build roads, homes, and other structures where wetlands once existed

Dredging- The act of removing **sediment** from the bottom of a wetland to change it. Often to make it into a pond

Tiling - The act of installing drainage into the soil so the ground dries up. Often used to expand agricultural production

Introduced species - Species introduced from other places that either outcompete native species or damage wetlands

What are some Wetland Species?

Mallard Duck - Mallard ducks are a duck species commonly found in wetlands. They feed in wetlands as well as raise their young in the grasslands around them

Whooping Crane - North America's tallest bird. It can grow nearly 7 feet tall

Northern Pike - A long, slimy fish with many sharp teeth that it uses to catch its prey

Duckweed - World's smallest plant! These tiny plants are an important food source for many different wetland species

Key words

- **Waterfowl -** Aquatic birds that live in and around water, typically including ducks, geese and swans
- **Endangered species -** Any species of animal or plant that is in danger of becoming extinct
- **Sediment -** The nutrient-rich "muck" on the bottom of a wetland

Wetlands need people to care about them. You can help by keeping wetlands clean, protecting native plants and animals, saving water, learning about wetlands, and teaching others why they matter. Even small actions can make a difference. Visit **www.conservewithcrayons.org/wetland-resources** for more ideas, pictures, and ways to help protect wetlands. Now it's time to draw your masterpiece. Be creative and have fun!

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