

Wetlands and Culture

WETLANDS ARE A CHERISHED PART OF CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

- The wetland landscape reflects the close relationship between humans and wetlands over millennia.
 - Down the ages, water has been venerated as the sustainer of life and plays an important role in the world's major faiths.
 - Wetlands have inspired humankind's creative and spiritual minds from the earliest times and have contributed to the artistic heritage of perhaps all cultures around the world.
 - People living near wetlands have developed socio-cultural values around wetlands that are integral to their culture, spiritual life, sense of place and current existence.
 - Wetlands provide a connection to nature that contributes to improved mental health and wellbeing.
 - Song, dance and stories as collective expressions of reverence towards wetlands are rich traditions that remain part of everyday life for many of the estimated **3 million** indigenous people living within at least **5,000** distinct cultures worldwide.
- The degradation of wetlands has consequences for the mental health of populations who live in those settings, including solastalgia – grieving over the loss of place.
- Their distinct roles and experiences within societies across the globe supply women with unique knowledge and valuable perspectives on wetlands. Women can play a crucial role in conserving the culture, folklore, music, mythology, oral traditions, customs and traditional knowledge around these precious ecosystems.

