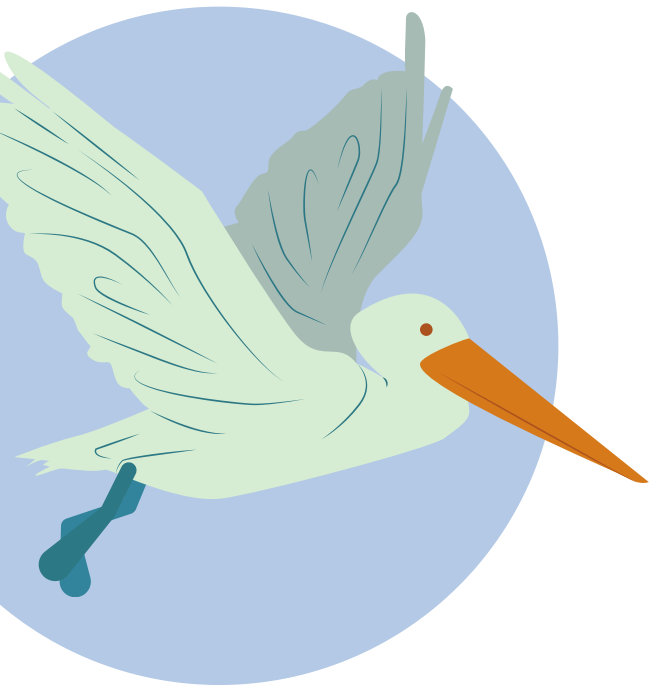


# THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS



## CRITICAL HABITAT

Just like you and me, all living things need a safe place to live. Wetlands worldwide provide habitat for a great diversity of animals including herons, ducks, beavers, turtles, fish, insects, and crustaceans, as well as a multitude of plants. Migrating birds often use wetlands as a place to rest and feed.

## WATER QUALITY

Wetlands play a major role in improving water quality. They filter sediments, pollutants, and nutrients from the water, which maintains a healthy ecosystem for the plants and animals that live there. Don't forget to thank a wetland for helping to keep our water clean.



## FLOOD CONTROL

If you have ever cleaned up spilled water with a sponge, then you can imagine how wetlands hold excess water in the environment. By storing water, wetlands can help prevent flooding and reduce erosion.

## FOOD & MEDICINE

How many times a week do you eat rice? Some of our food staples such as wild rice, fish, and shrimp are all produced in wetlands. Blueberries, seaweed, and other fruits, nuts, and leafy vegetables can all be harvested sustainably here. In addition, many medicines are derived from plants found in wetlands.

