



# Connecting with wetlands

## Re-connecting with Nature

It is often said that modern cultures have lost their connection to nature. Slowing down and connecting to the environment around you is a skill. It has been practiced by indigenous cultures for thousands of years.

There are many ways in which you can connect to nature and wetlands. Activities and practices that assist people to re-connect with nature will increase the value people place on nature. In turn, it is hoped that this will inspire and encourage people to take action to protect these valuable ecosystems.

## Introduce yourself to your local wetland

Wetlands are great places to explore, for recreation, art and learning, and to connect with nature. Next time you decide to get back to nature, why not find out what wonders your local wetlands hold for you. There are many ways you can introduce yourself to wetlands;

- Fishing
- Bird watching
- Bushwalking
- Picnicking
- Art
- Photography
- Poetry

### Don't let the 'wet' put you off wetlands

Getting into nature and getting muddy can be fun. Be prepared for adventure by bringing your boots, a towel and first aid kit, along with everything else you need to be comfortable and safe exploring wetlands.

## Mindfully connecting with nature: Deep attentive listening



In our busy lives we often find it difficult to find time to relax and enjoy our surroundings. One way that you can deliberately connect to nature, which doesn't take long, is to use a method called deep attentive listening in which you engage all of your senses (Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre, 1994). You may do this instinctively while you are fishing, surfing, bird watching, drawing or doing other activities in nature, but you can do it anytime, here's how;

***Find a comfortable place to sit in or overlooking the wetland or in nature, observe, relax and just be still...***

Don't move around or talk to anyone. What can you hear? What can you smell? What can you see? What animals are there that you didn't notice while walking? What do you feel? Can you feel the breeze on your skin? You might like to close your eyes for a while. You might like to jot down your thoughts or observations. This is called being attentive. Practicing attentiveness opens up a connection with nature that can only be experienced. Try it one day.

## Children love wetlands

Wetlands can be a real experience for children. Animals, birds, trees and flowers fascinate children – and not forgetting that wetlands are often **muddy**. It can be rewarding to just walk with children and 'look through their eyes', let them stop and look at whatever they want to without moving them on, as they can often find things that we as adults overlook.



Photo: Children love getting out into nature and wetlands (Lee Middleton)

## Leave nothing but footprints...

Wetlands are magnificent places to explore and relax, however they can also be fragile ecosystems. While you are enjoying your local wetland, make sure that you minimise your impact on wetlands by;

- Taking nothing
- Leave nothing behind



Photo: Wetlands are beautiful but can be fragile (Adam Gosling)

To help with this, contact whoever manages the wetland (local Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Lands) and make sure it is ok to enter the wetland, what safety precautions you should take and what to look out for. They may even have suggestions for you on how to enhance your experiences.

## How you can further experience wetlands

- Contact your local twitchers – there are birdwatching groups all around Australia
- Join your local Landcare group
- Join your local Fishing Club
- Enter the WetlandCare Australia National Art and Photography competition
- Contact National Parks and Wildlife Service and ask about local tours
- Start a SwampCare group with your friends and neighbours – contact WetlandCare Australia



Photo: Joining a group can enhance your enjoyment of wetland (Adam Gosling, WetlandCare Australia)

*WetlandCare Australia would like to acknowledge the experiences and information provided by the staff of Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre on deep attentive listening.*

Rosie's Creek: Teachers Resource Booklet (1994) Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre  
<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/wetlandinfo/site/spreadtheword/GBR.html>

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