

Wetlands in Bangladesh

CE 107

What are Wetlands ?

- Bangladesh possesses enormous area of wetlands including rivers and streams, freshwater lakes and marshes, haors, baors, beels, water storage reservoirs, fish ponds, flooded cultivated fields and estuarine systems with extensive mangrove swamps.
- Wetlands of coastal and marine origin are less important in Bangladesh. The haors, baors, beels and jheels are of fluvial origin and are commonly identified as freshwater wetlands.
- These freshwater wetlands occupy four landscape units - floodplains, freshwater marshes, lakes and swamp forests.

Wetlands : Examples

- Located in the lower edge of the topography, wetlands are subject to periodic inundation/flooding, shallow to deep, during wet monsoon.
- Apart from the major river courses and streams, the major wetlands of fluvial origin occupy the floodplains.
- The manmade wetlands including ponds, dighis and lakes are distributed all over the floodplains. Some important wetlands of the country are chalan beel, Atrai basin, lower Punarbhaba floodplain, Gopalganj-Khulna Beels, Arial Beel, and Surma-Kushiyara floodplain.

Importance of Wetlands

- The wetlands have a wide range of ecological, socio-cultural, economic and commercial importance and values in Bangladesh.
- These are important habitats for a large variety of flora and fauna of local, national and regional significance.
- Wetlands are critically important in Bangladesh for human settlements, biodiversity, fisheries, agricultural diversity, navigation & communication, and ecotourism.

Degradation of Wetlands

- Degradation of wetlands has caused several problems including
 - extinction and reduction of wildlife,
 - extinction of many indigenous wild and domesticated rice varieties,
 - loss of many indigenous aquatic plants, herbs, shrubs and weeds,
 - loss of natural soil nutrients,
 - loss of natural water reservoirs and of their resultant benefits,
 - increase in the occurrence of flooding and degeneration of wetland based ecosystems, occupations, socio-economic institutions and cultures.

Reference

- Bangladesh Water Development Board

http://www.bwdb.gov.bd/index.php?Itemid=94&id=104&option=com_content&view=article