

## ReNOKA World Wetlands Day Campaign

Blog topic: **Palustrine Wetlands**

### The benefits of restoring palustrine wetlands

Since 1997, World Wetlands Day has been an international day dedicated to raising public awareness of the value and importance of wetlands. To celebrate World Wetlands Day 2023, we are looking at how to restore our wetlands here in Lesotho. In this article, we will be looking at palustrine wetlands, why they are important and what you can do to help protect them.

### What are palustrine wetlands?

Palustrine wetlands are the most common type found in Lesotho. If you happen to see standing or slow-moving water surrounded by reeds, shrubs and grass, chances are it is a palustrine wetland. In Lesotho, we can find palustrine wetlands in the form of marshes (an area that is covered by water for long periods of time), bogs (wet, spongy ground) and swamps (a land area saturated with water).

### Why are they important?

Palustrine wetlands are important for a number of reasons:

- Marshes can store carbon which reduces the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and slows down climate change. They are also known to provide fishing and hunting opportunities for people, and grazing opportunities for livestock.
- Bogs help to regulate the flow of water in the land and streams flowing from bogs help to provide water to nearby communities.
- Swamps can filter and purify water, reduce the impact of floods, and are home to many species of plants and animals- many of which are rare or threatened.

### What can we do to conserve wetlands?

Several wetlands throughout Lesotho are the subject of scientific studies. Scientists gain valuable information from these wetlands (much like the facts listed above). By seeing the value in these wetlands, people can understand why they are so very important.

Despite this, wetlands are disappearing quickly due to factors such as:

- Overgrazing: by letting livestock constantly feed in the same place, we are damaging the land by causing erosion. This leads to the land holding less water which could negatively affect communities and habitats benefiting from the wetland.



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- Invasive plant species: these alien plants can take nutrition away from local plants, and also cause soil erosion by sucking up more water than local counterparts.
- Climate change: the hotter it gets the more wetlands will start to dry up. This could lead to a loss of biodiversity.
- Pollution: when our wetlands become full of pollutants, the plants, animals and water quality could all suffer. This has a direct impact on human consumption.
- Being drained for farming and settlements: human encroachment compromise wetlands functioning.

By being more responsible in our farming practices, not draining wetlands, and helping to reduce the amount of pollution and invasive species in the area, we can conserve Lesotho's many incredible wetlands.



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