

## 2025 Global Wetland Outlook

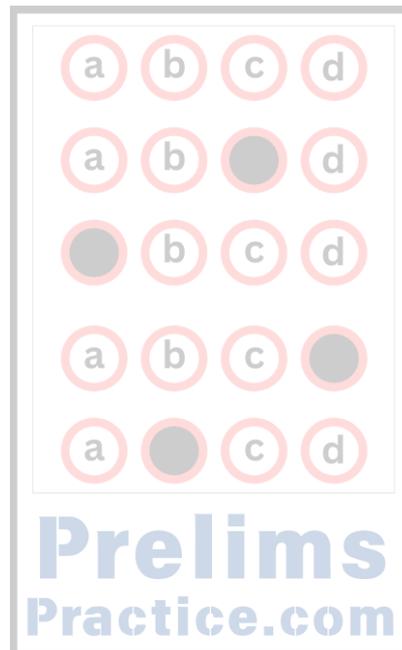
The 2025 Global Wetland Outlook report was released in July 2025 at the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention (COP15) in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

The report confirms wetlands are vanishing 3x faster than forests, with a 22% global loss since 1970, leading to severe biodiversity decline and threats to carbon sinks. Major drivers include agriculture, water extraction, pollution, and climate change. The report also highlights a significant financing gap for wetland restoration and conservation, emphasizing the economic and ecological benefits of prioritizing protection over restoration.

### Key Points from the Report:

- **Rapid Loss Rate:** Wetlands are disappearing at an alarming rate, three times faster than forests, with an estimated loss of 411 million hectares (22% of the global total) since 1970.
- **Biodiversity Crisis:** The population of wetland species has plummeted by over 80% between 1970 and 2022, indicating a severe crisis for wetland biodiversity.
- **Critical Carbon Stores:** Peatlands, a vital type of wetland, store 30% of global soil carbon, underscoring their crucial role in climate regulation.
- **Major Drivers of Loss:** Agriculture, water extraction, infrastructure development, pollution, and the impacts of climate change are the primary causes of wetland degradation and loss.
- **Threats to Carbon Sinks:** The ongoing loss and degradation of wetlands directly threatens their function as natural carbon sinks, potentially accelerating climate change.
- **Ecological Deterioration:** Around 25% of the world's remaining wetlands are in poor ecological condition, a proportion that is increasing in all regions.
- **Significant Financing Gap:** An estimated annual financing gap of \$275 billion to \$550 billion exists to meet global biodiversity and climate targets for wetland conservation and restoration.
- **Economic and Societal Impact:** The loss of wetlands leads to a loss of \$39 trillion in global benefits and increases vulnerability to climate-related disasters.

- **Call to Action:** The report emphasizes the need to prioritize conservation and restoration, integrate wetlands into national development strategies, and mobilize public and private resources to avoid further irreversible damage.
- **Drivers of decline:** The primary pressures driving the loss and degradation of wetlands include:
  - Land-use change, such as agricultural expansion and urban development
  - Pollution from various sources
  - Hydrological disruption
  - Invasive species
  - Climate change, including rising sea levels and drought.



## Practice Questions:

1. Which of the following is/are a major driver of wetland loss identified in the 2025 Global Wetland Outlook report?

- I. Urbanisation
- II. Agriculture
- III. Invasive species
- IV. Pollution

Choose the correct answer:

- a) I, II, and III only
- b) II, III, and IV only
- c) I, II, and IV only
- d) I, II, III, and IV

**Answer: d**

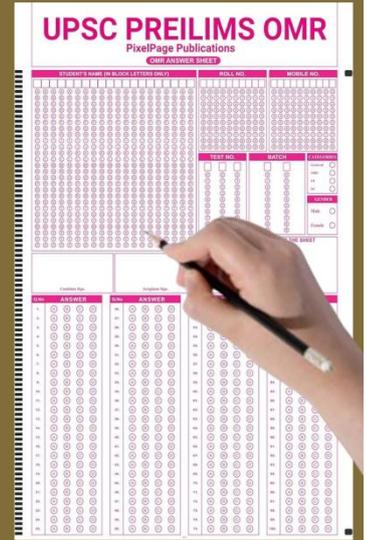
**Explanation: Urbanisation and Industrial/Infrastructure Development:** The report highlights urbanisation and industrial/infrastructure development as key drivers of wetland decline, especially in regions like Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This involves direct habitat loss through land reclamation and the construction of buildings and roads. **Agriculture:** Agriculture is identified as a primary driver of wetland loss globally, primarily through the conversion of wetlands to agricultural land, water extraction for irrigation, and nutrient pollution from agricultural runoff. Over half of Wetlands of International Importance are reportedly damaged by agriculture. **Invasive Species:** The introduction of invasive species is a significant concern for wetland ecosystems, particularly in regions such as North America and Oceania. These species can alter habitats, disrupt natural populations, and lead to a loss of native biodiversity. **Pollution:** Pollution from various sources, including urban and industrial wastewater, agricultural runoff (pesticides, fertilisers), and solid waste, severely degrades wetland quality. This contamination leads to issues such as eutrophication and can be toxic to plant and animal life.

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