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Wetlands crucial for conserving biodiversity, say experts

Dr Sidharth Kaul, the president of Wetlands International South Asia, said that conserving wetlands requires affirmative actions from the entire society.

Written by **Aksheev Thakur** | Bengaluru |

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Dr Sidharth Kaul, the president of Wetlands International South Asia, said that conserving wetlands requires affirmative actions from the entire society.

On the occasion of the World Wetlands Day on Wednesday, environmental experts here stressed on the role wetlands play in sustaining biodiversity.

Dr TV Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Science at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) said, “Wetlands support the livelihoods of people... The government has embarked on an ambitious jal-nal programme to provide water to all in the country. To realise this noble mission, we have to conserve and prudently manage wetlands so that we all (and our children) have adequate and quality water,” he said.

The co-founder of Friends of Lakes, Ram Prasad, said, “Wetlands play a crucial role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and locking it away in plants, root systems and soil. They also sustain a large number of birds, fish and other small creatures which live in harmony.

For many of us, water simply flows from a tap and we hardly reflect about it beyond this point of contact and consumption. In the process, we have lost a sense of respect for the complex workings of a wetland and the intricate web of life that this simple waterbody supports.”

Dr Sidharth Kaul, the president of Wetlands International South Asia, said that conserving wetlands requires affirmative actions from the entire society.

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“A beginning can be made by raising universal awareness of the vital contributions wetlands make to biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, freshwater availability, world economies — and thereby, to our prosperity, well-being and existence. The full range of values and functions of wetlands needs to be considered and integrated in developmental plans, programmes and investments at all levels and sectors... Conservation of wetlands can lower the impacts of tropical cyclones and tsunamis. Several wetlands can sequester carbon at rates higher than tropical forests. They can make cities liveable through their ability to provide water, buffer floods and droughts and regulate microclimate,” Kaul added.



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