



Wonderful Wetlands

Vocab: hydric, hydrophytic, carnivorous, marsh, prairie pothole, swamp, bog, fen, mangrove

A wetland is an ecosystem. To be a wetland an area must meet three qualifications. One, it must have water in it for part of the year. Some wetlands only have water in the spring, others always have water. Two, there must be hydric soil. The word “hydro” is Greek for water. Hydric soil has lots of water and very little oxygen. And third, a wetland has hydrophytic plants. Remember, “hydro” means water and “phytic” means loving. Wetland plants grow well in lots of water.

Marshes can be found all around the world. Grass is the main plant in a marsh. In Minnesota, an example of a marsh is a **prairie pothole**. A prairie pothole is a dip in the earth caused by a glacier. It can contain water in the spring or all year. Most prairie potholes are used as farmland today.

Opposite of a marsh is a **swamp**. Swamps are different because they grow trees. The Eastern coast of the United States has many swamps.

A **bog** is unique because it is acidic and grows carnivorous plants. Carnivorous plants, like the pitcher plant, eat insects. Bogs also develop peat. The low levels of oxygen in a wetland mean that dead plants decompose, or break down, very slowly. A thick layer of slowly decomposing plants is called peat. A **fen** is similar to a bog, but is not acidic.

Mangroves are found along the ocean coast in tropical areas. Mangroves protect the coast from waves. They also provide a safe place for young fish to grow.

All types of wetlands provide important food and habitat for wildlife, clean water, and protection against flooding. Plus, they are a beautiful place to visit!

Wetland Words



What does "hydro" mean? _____

Unscramble these wetland types:

G B O _____

S H M R A _____

G M R A O N E V _____

E F N _____

E I P I R A R H P O O T E L _____

P A M S W _____

List 2 ways wetlands are helpful:

1. _____

2. _____

