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## World Wetlands Day 2017: the flood prevention connection

News

LWF

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*Photo courtesy of Ducks Unlimited Canada*

Feb. 2 is World Wetlands Day, celebrated in honour of the United Nations' 1971 adoption of the [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#), which provides an international framework for wetland conservation and use. It's a day to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands and take action to protect these special areas.

This year's theme is "Wetlands for Disaster Risk Reduction," selected to highlight the vital role healthy wetlands play in reducing the impacts of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts.

Certainly, this is something to which Manitobans can relate: our province and its citizens know all too well the significant environmental, social and economic impacts of flooding. But flooding events are also nutrient-loading events, as LWF's executive director Alexis Kanu points out in [this opinion piece](#), co-written with Scott Stephens, director of regional operations (Prairie region) for Ducks Unlimited Canada and published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Excess nutrients contribute to the growth of potentially harmful algae blooms on Lake Winnipeg and other waterbodies. Healthy wetlands help reduce this risk because the vegetation in these ecosystems filters out nutrients like phosphorus. Wetlands also support a staggering amount of plant and animal biodiversity, acting as nesting and summer destinations for many species of migratory birds, and as year-round homes for insects, amphibians and larger mammals.

Keeping Water on the Land is [Action 1](#) of our [Lake Winnipeg Health Plan](#), in recognition that protecting Manitoba's remaining wetlands will help protect the health of Lake Winnipeg.

Here are a few ways you can celebrate World Wetlands Day 2017:

- Read our World Wetlands Day [opinion piece](#) in the Feb. 2 edition of the *Winnipeg Free Press* - then share it with your networks.
- Learn more about how LWF is working to protect wetlands: browse our website's "[For Citizens](#)" section, where you'll find recent advocacy efforts to legislate conservation of Manitoba's threatened wetland ecosystems.
- Visit the official World Wetlands Day [website](#): it has lots of information and downloadable educational resources.
- Follow the conversation online; across the globe, organizations and individuals will be using the hashtags #WorldWetlandsDay, #WetlandsForOurFuture and #WetlandsforDRR
- Explore your local wetland: Here in Manitoba, there are lots to choose from, including [Oak Hammock Marsh](#), an internationally recognized site!

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