WETLANDS FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Key recommendations for UNFCCC COP31

Antalya, Türkiye | 9–20 November 2026

9 Key Recommendations

1. Strengthen the integration of wetlands into national climate action and reporting.
2. Make wetlands and water more visible in the operationalisation of the Global Goal on Adaptation indicators.
3. Include wetland evidence in the initial phase of the second Global Stocktake.
4. Strengthen coherence across climate, biodiversity, land and water.
5. Scale accessible, long-term finance for wetland action.
6. Strengthen the recognition of nature-based solutions, including wetlands, under Article 6.
7. Safeguard wetlands across the climate and economic transition.
8. Accelerate delivery through partnerships and existing initiatives.
9. Promote high-integrity voluntary carbon markets and responsible corporate climate action *(relevant to climate action beyond the formal UNFCCC agenda)*

Why wetlands matter at COP31?

Rapid, deep and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels are indispensable to meeting the Paris Agreement goals. Alongside these efforts, protecting, restoring and sustainably managing wetlands is essential to reducing emissions from degraded ecosystems, safeguarding carbon stocks, and strengthening adaptation and resilience. Wetland action complements, but cannot replace, the transition away from fossil fuels.

Wetlands are critical natural infrastructure for climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, connecting climate, biodiversity, land, water and people. From peatlands, rivers, lakes and floodplains to deltas and mangroves, wetlands are fundamental to climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience. Healthy wetlands store vast amounts of carbon, regulate water flows, reduce the impacts of floods, droughts and coastal hazards, and support biodiversity and livelihoods. However, when degraded, wetlands can become significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions, while losing their capacity to provide these essential services.

COP31's focus on implementation, together with discussions on the Global Goal on Adaptation indicators, the beginning of the second Global Stocktake and Rio Synergies, and other matters across the negotiations and Action Agenda, offer an opportunity to strengthen the recognition of wetlands in climate action and translate commitments into measurable action, stronger policy coherence and investment.

Key recommendations

1. Strengthen the integration of wetlands into national climate action and reporting

Strengthen explicit commitments to wetland conservation, restoration and wise use in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and sectoral implementation plans. Translate commitments into clear priorities, institutional responsibilities, investment plans and financing arrangements, science-based, measurable targets and monitoring systems. Prioritise actions to prevent further wetland loss and degradation, halt new peatland drainage and accelerate the rewetting and restoration of degraded peatlands, protect and restore rivers, lakes and floodplains and their ecological connectivity, and safeguard and restore mangroves and other coastal wetlands. These actions should be supported by integrated land and water management at catchment and landscape scales, reflecting national circumstances and priorities.

Strengthen the inclusion of coastal and inland wetlands in national greenhouse gas inventories and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), applying relevant IPCC guidance, including the 2013 Wetlands Supplement, and ensuring appropriate accounting of belowground soil carbon and, where appropriate, disaggregated reporting of wetland ecosystems. Draw on guidance from the Convention on Wetlands to improve national wetland inventories, mapping and monitoring, and better account for wetland-related emissions and removals. In particular, improve the identification and accounting of wetland-related emissions and removals across relevant land-use categories, including cropland, grassland and forest land, in line with IPCC methodologies.

2. Make wetlands and water more visible in the operationalisation of the Global Goal on Adaptation indicators

As Parties advance the operationalisation of the 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators through the Belém–Addis Vision, ensure that wetlands and water are adequately reflected in their methodologies, supporting data and practical application. This should include both indicators directly related to wetlands and those capturing their contributions to broader adaptation outcomes, such as water security, flood and drought resilience, coastal protection, ecosystem services

and human well-being. Support the use of existing wetland data, monitoring systems and relevant technical guidance, including from the Convention on Wetlands, to facilitate national implementation and reporting, while taking into account countries' different capacities and circumstances.

3. Include wetland evidence in the initial phase of the second Global Stocktake

Ensure that evidence on the contributions of wetlands to climate mitigation and adaptation, as well as the finance, capacity and other support needed to scale up wetland action, is included in the information collection and preparation phase of the second Global Stocktake (GST2), starting at COP31. Draw on evidence about the role of peatlands, mangroves and other wetlands in climate mitigation, including carbon storage, preventing wetland loss and degradation, reducing emissions from degraded ecosystems, and carbon removals where relevant. Also highlight their contributions to climate adaptation and resilience, including water regulation, flood and drought risk reduction, coastal protection, water security and livelihoods.

4. Strengthen coherence across climate, biodiversity, land and water

Use the COP31 discussions on cooperation with other international organisations, including the Rio Conventions, to encourage stronger cooperation and information exchange among the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD, with meaningful engagement of the Convention on Wetlands. Promote greater collaboration among national focal points and relevant institutions to strengthen coherence across climate, biodiversity, land and water policies and actions. Build on the COP31 Action Agenda and its focus on Rio Synergies to showcase and advance integrated approaches. Encourage planning and action at catchment, landscape and coastal-system scales, recognising that ecosystems are interconnected and that decisions beyond their boundaries can affect their health, functioning and resilience, with consequences for water security, livelihoods and human well-being.



Central Kalimantan, Indonesia
Credits: Yus Rusila Noor

5. Scale accessible, long-term finance for wetland action

Increase climate finance for wetland conservation, restoration and wise use, recognising their contributions to both mitigation and adaptation, particularly through carbon storage, emissions reductions, water security and climate resilience. Public finance should better support wetlands as critical natural infrastructure, including by addressing and, where appropriate, redirecting incentives and subsidies that contribute to their degradation. Ensure that wetlands are adequately considered in the implementation of the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T and relevant climate finance mechanisms. Improve access to finance, particularly for developing countries, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, smallholder farmers, and support the development of long-term, investment programmes that can deliver wetland action at scale. Support the mobilisation of public and private finance to help achieve the global ambitions of the Mangrove Breakthrough (USD 4 billion by 2030) and the Peatland Breakthrough (at least USD 100 billion by 2030), while supporting resource mobilisation for the Freshwater Challenge, and strengthening the role of all three collaborative efforts in advancing national implementation of climate, biodiversity, water and land-related goals.

6. Strengthen the recognition of nature-based solutions, including wetlands, under Article 6

Ensure that the implementation of Article 6 creates opportunities to mobilise finance for nature-based solutions, including wetland conservation and restoration, while maintaining high environmental and social integrity. At COP31, encourage Parties to provide guidance to the Article 6.4 Supervisory Body to ensure that the rules and methodologies adequately reflect the characteristics of different ecosystems and do not create unintended barriers to their participation, nor their implicit exclusion. In particular, methodologies should appropriately recognise reductions in ongoing emissions through the restoration and rewetting of degraded peatlands, restoration of mangroves, alongside carbon removals where relevant, while addressing environmental and social safeguards, and equitable benefit-sharing. Promote non-market approaches under Article 6.8 as complementary opportunities for international cooperation on wetland mitigation and adaptation.

7. Safeguard wetlands across the climate and economic transition

Ensure that mitigation, energy transition, agriculture, mining, infrastructure and other sectoral policies do not inadvertently degrade wetlands, disrupt water flows or transfer environmental and social costs to communities. Apply appropriate safeguards and assess impacts at landscape and catchment scales. Respect the rights, knowledge and participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, smallholder farmers, and support just and locally appropriate transitions.

8. Accelerate delivery through partnerships and existing initiatives

Support country-led and collaborative implementation through the Freshwater Challenge, Peatland Breakthrough and Mangrove Breakthrough. These platforms can help bring together countries and relevant partners, promote knowledge exchange and technical cooperation, and support efforts to mobilise resources for the implementation of national commitments. Strengthen links with the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, forest-related implementation efforts and other relevant processes, ensuring that rivers, floodplains, peatlands and mangroves are not overlooked in wider ecosystem agendas.

9. Promote high-integrity voluntary carbon markets and responsible corporate climate action *(relevant to climate action beyond the formal UNFCCC agenda)*

Promote voluntary carbon markets as a complementary source of finance for wetland conservation and restoration, underpinned by robust environmental and social standards, credible monitoring and verification, and the responsible use of carbon credits. Such finance should complement, rather than substitute for, increased and adequate public finance for wetland action. Ensure respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, their meaningful participation and equitable benefit-

sharing. Companies should set and implement science-based emissions reduction targets across their operations and value chains, while ensuring that carbon credits complement rather than substitute for these efforts. The use of credits should be transparent, supported by credible climate claims, and should not justify continued avoidable emissions. Corporate climate standards and net-zero frameworks should appropriately recognise the role of wetland conservation and restoration, distinguishing between preventing future emissions, reducing ongoing emissions from degraded wetlands and generating carbon removals. In particular, emissions reductions achieved through peatland rewetting should be recognised as active mitigation, where robustly demonstrated, rather than treated simply as avoided emissions.

From commitments to delivery

COP31 provides an opportunity to move wetlands from recognition in climate discussions towards stronger national policies, credible indicators, accessible finance and implementation at scale. Recognising wetlands as critical natural infrastructure can help strengthen the case for protecting and restoring connected wetland landscapes, which can advance climate mitigation and adaptation while supporting water security, biodiversity and livelihoods. This requires coordinated action by governments, finance institutions, businesses and communities, alongside decisive reductions in fossil-fuel emissions.

List of key documents:

1. Convention on Wetlands (2025). Wetland inventories for wetland carbon assessments. Technical Report 14. Gland, Switzerland: Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands. https://doi.org/10.69556/strp.tr14.25.eng

2. Convention on Wetlands (2025). Wetland mapping and inventories to catalyse carbon assessments. Policy Brief 9. Gland, Switzerland: Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands. https://doi.org/10.69556/strp.pb9.25.eng

3. Convention on Wetlands (2021). Global guidelines for peatland rewetting and restoration. Technical Report 11. Gland, Switzerland: Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands. https://doi.org/10.69556/strp.tr11.21.eng

4. Peatland Breakthrough Science based targets www.peatlandbreakthrough.org

5. Mangroves and UNFCCC COP31 Entry Points and Recommendations https://www.wetlands.org/download/15449/?tmstv=1793840588

Contact Details

post@wetlands.org



Bog Bean, Western Isles, Scotland
Credits: Hans Schutten