

The Activity

Each charm ingredient represents a piece of the ecology of a wetland in either form or function. Pass out one charm bag to each student. Discuss each ingredient, challenging students to make the connection to wetlands. Following each discussion, students add the recommended amount of the ingredient to the bag. Upon completion, the bag is sealed, and the yarn is strung through the hole and tied to create a necklace. As an extension ask students to share their new wetland knowledge with friends and family.

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Wetland Charm Kits	Quantity	Cost
(30count) \$10.00 ea.		
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Wetland Charm

An enchanting way to teach wetland functions and values.



Environmental Concern Inc.
All About Wetlands Since 1972
www.wetland.org

Background

To realize just how important wetlands are, let's envision a world without wetlands. What would this world look like? The first thing you may notice is the quiet. Since one hundred percent of the world's waterfowl population is dependent on wetlands – a world without wetlands is a world without honking geese, crooning loons, or quacking ducks. Forget about the peeps, barks and clicks from frogs and toads as well. Amphibians have to spend part of their life cycle in water – making wetlands an indispensable part of their existence. Wetlands are also home to many other species of animals including 30% of all threatened and endangered species.

In addition to the silence, you may also notice a change at the grocery store or your favorite restaurant. If you like crabs, shrimp, oysters, clams, or fish, you may not like a world without wetlands. Wetlands are the world's breeding and nursery grounds for fish and shellfish. The coastal marshlands offer seclusion and protection from predators and ocean currents, along with an all you can eat buffet of decaying plant material, the foundation of the food web.

There is nothing more refreshing than a tall glass of cool water on a hot day. In a world without wetlands, it may become more difficult to quench your thirst. Some people get their drinking water from underground stores called aquifers. When it rains, some water washes off into streams while other water seeps through the ground to refill underground water supplies. Wetlands help by collecting water and holding it so it has a chance to travel through the ground to refill the aquifers.

To be truly satisfying, that glass of cool water on a hot day also needs to be clean. Wetlands are nature's filters. As it flows overland, water will pick up just about anything; trash, sediment and pollutants. Gravity is working to get that water to the lowest point on the landscape as quickly as possible. Wetlands work to slow the pace of the water allowing sediments to fall out of suspension and give plants time to take up and process the pollutants. Water that flows through a wetland is cleaner upon exiting.

A world without wetlands would also be a more dangerous place. Over 70% of the world's population lives within the coastal zone. Coastal wetlands are nature's speed bumps – they scrub off energy weakening tropical storms. Scientists estimate that 2.7 miles of marsh decrease storm surge by 1 foot. The loss of coastal marshes and forests are making the human population more vulnerable to the effects of storms as witnessed in the South Asian Tsunami as well as Hurricane Katrina. Moving away from the coast, riverine wetlands help protect life and property from seasonal floods.

Could a world without wetlands ever become a reality? Unfortunately the answer is yes. Worldwide, wetlands are in danger and need your help. In the past 200 years alone, the U.S. has lost over 50% of its wetland resources and this loss continues. Together we can and must make a difference.

Charm Ingredients

Ingredient	Wetland Characteristic or Function	Amount
Brown/Gold Glitter	Wetlands occur where land and water meet.	Pinch
Blue Glitter	Wetland hydrology (water) can be fresh, salt, brackish.	Pinch
Green Glitter	Wetlands are home to unique plants adapted to live in wet conditions. <i>NOTE: wetlands make up 6% of the earth yet are home to 30% of plant species.</i>	Pinch
House	Wetlands are critical to wildlife.	1 or 2
Baby/Bottle	Wetlands are a breeding place and act as a nursery for fish and shellfish.	1 or 2
Fish	Fish rely on wetlands.	2 to 3
Frog	Reptiles and amphibians rely on wetlands	1 or 2
Sponge	Wetlands collect and hold water.	1 or 2
Rice	Rice is a wetland plant. Cultivated in wet paddies, rice is a dietary Staple for more people than any other crop. <i>NOTE: Wild rice was a food source for Native Americans.</i>	Pinch
Filter paper/ kidney bean	Wetland plants filter out and process the pollutants we don't want to get into our bodies of water.	1
Heart	Wetlands are a vital ecosystem that works for us without being asked. We should love and protect our wetlands.	1 or 2