

St. Monica Green Team

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Celebrate World Wetlands Day

What is World Wetlands Day?

On February 2 each year, we celebrate World Wetlands Day to raise awareness about the Earth's beautiful wetland ecosystems. Though wetlands are critical for biodiversity, climate mitigation, freshwater availability, world economies and more, we are losing them three times faster than forests. California has lost 91% of its coastal wetlands and Los Angeles has lost even more. The same rings true all over the world: we are losing essential ecosystems due to overdevelopment and deforestation.



Get to know the Ballona Wetlands

World Wetlands Day is ideal to get to know your local wetlands: the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve. Sitting at the western edge of Los Angeles county, the Ballona Creek Wetlands are a diverse ecosystem comprising many different habitats. Before the era of industrialization, the wetlands stretched 2,000 acres from Playa del Rey to Venice and inland to Baldwin Hills. Today, only approximately 600 acres remain due to deterioration after centuries of urbanization and abuse. The wetlands have historically undergone immense struggles, yet only recently have people begun to take a stand for conservation.

Service opportunities

Because so many organisms—including us—rely on wetlands, it is imperative that we raise national and global awareness about them in order to reverse their rapid loss. [Friends of Ballona Wetlands](#) currently offers volunteer opportunities to participate in creek cleanups that remove debris that would otherwise end up in the wetlands. **Join the next restoration on Friday, 2/4 at 3pm or take a tour on Saturday, 2/5 at 10am.** Register for all Friends of Ballona events [here](#).

FAST FACTS

Ballona Wetlands Wildlife

- ❖ The wetlands house a wide range of native animal species, from the more common coyote and Great Blue Heron to the rarer California legless lizard and tidewater goby.
- ❖ Millions of migratory birds on the Pacific flyway—a 7,500-mile route—stop in Ballona for refuge and food on their long journey.



The Belding's Savannah Sparrow is one of many wetland species affected by climate change

- ❖ Flora are the foundation for all other Ballona organisms. Cattail, wildrice, and pickleweed shelter small fish and amphibians, and they are also valuable sources of nutrition for small herbivores.
- ❖ Many other species used to take refuge in the Ballona Wetlands; however, due to humans, many have become extinct or fled.