

What constitutes a wetland?

Zimbabwe has recently become a contracting party to the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar defines a wetland as: *“areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is status of flowing, fresh, brackish or salty...”*

In North America the US Fish and Wildlife Service considers wetlands as *“lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water.”* (Breen *et al.* 1997)

The South African Department of Environment Affairs defines this, *inter alia*, as follows: *“Marshes, bogs, swamps, vleis and sponges are examples of wetlands.”*