

## **The humid zone**

Wetlands are swamps and marshes, natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with fresh running water.

In ecology, wetlands are natural areas characterized by the permanent or temporary presence of water.

Because of their fundamental ecological functions, they are recognised as international natural resources by the Convention signed in Iran in 1971, by a number of international environmental agencies.

In Italy there are fifty sites included in the list of Wetlands of International Importance and ten are located in Emilia Romagna, all within the Po Delta Regional Park.

The selection of wetlands to be included in the List provided by the Convention is made on the basis of their international ecological and biodiversity importance.

Wetlands are often located in transition zones between dry terrestrial ecosystems and permanently inundated and deep water aquatic systems, such as rivers, lakes, estuaries or oceans.

Wetlands are invaluable in the functioning of regional ecosystems and for the global ecosystem, in fact in some areas of the world

entire human populations depend on these environments for their livelihood.