



## THREATS

**The United States has lost over half of the wetlands in the lower 48 states, and the losses continue at an estimate of over 60,000 acres per year.**

The life-supporting importance of wetlands was largely unrecognized in the past. People drained, dredged, dammed and channeled wetlands, eliminated or converted them into dry land or filled them for lakes and water retention areas -- changing wetlands into cropland, pasture and subdivisions, mining the underlying resources, ridding insect life, filling in for road beds or flooding them for open water lakes, and using them for dumping grounds for waste and sewage.

### **Legal Status/Protection**

In the United States some wetlands are regulated under the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act. Some states and counties also have wetland protections. Internationally, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance recognizes significant wetlands and works to conserve them.

There are several ways people try to protect wetlands today including, most importantly, preserving existing wetlands, and also other actions, such as, attempting to substitute newly created wetlands for areas that are destroyed.