

The wetland model of urban sustainability

February 7 2024, by David Bradley



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Writing in the [*International Journal of Global Environmental Issues*](#), a team from Japan explains that "wetlands play an important role in a sustainable urban future." They add that these environmental regions provide ecological services to the cities in which they are sited as well as sustaining wildlife and even allowing the transmission and development

of Indigenous culture.

In this context the wetland parks of Suzhou, China, have emerged as exemplars of urban sustainability, offering crucial ecological services and preserving cultural heritage. Lihui Zhou and John Joseph Puthenkalam of Sophia University, Japan in their study shed light on the significance both locally and globally of such wetlands.

Suzhou is located in the Jiangsu Province of eastern China and boasts a rich tapestry of wetlands. These wetlands, which include a network of rivers, lakes, and marshes, have played a vital role in the region's ecology and culture for centuries. They serve as crucial habitats for a variety of plant and [animal species](#), providing breeding grounds for [migratory birds](#) and supporting diverse aquatic life.

They also play an important role in [flood control](#), water purification, and sediment retention. In addition to this environmental and ecological significance, Suzhou's wetlands hold immense cultural value with the city's ancient and renowned classical gardens, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, intricately connected with the wetlands.

Despite facing threats from urbanization and industrialization, Suzhou has made efforts to preserve and restore its wetlands in recent years. Wetland restoration projects, ecological conservation programs, and sustainable development planning have allowed the city to balance [economic growth](#) and environmental protection.

The research explores how tailored restoration efforts have boosted the ecological and cultural impact as sustainable urban development takes place. The Suzhou model thus demonstrates how local conditions can help with restoration strategies, ultimately enhancing the ecological resilience and cultural relevance of such sites.

By prioritizing wetland conservation, Suzhou has been able to safeguard its local ecosystems, nurture [cultural heritage](#), and promote [environmental education](#). Such initiatives might even resonate beyond Suzhou, emphasizing the broader implications of wetland park development for urban sustainability worldwide.

More information: Lihui Zhou et al, Analysis of the role of wetland parks in urban sustainability: a case study of Suzhou, China, *International Journal of Global Environmental Issues* (2024). [DOI: 10.1504/IJGENVI.2023.136301](#)

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