

Background

- The Saskatchewan River Delta is the largest inland freshwater delta in North America and the third largest in the world.
- The total soil organic carbon stored by the entire Saskatchewan River Delta is approximately 589 million tonnes, which is equivalent to the total annual CO₂ emissions from an estimated 460 million cars, or 20 years of emissions from 23 million automobiles.
- Cumberland House Cree Nation's traditional territory encompasses the majority of the Delta with an area of 1,195,025 hectares.
- The Delta supports over 100 species of plants, 10 lichen, 115 birds, 40 fish, and 30 mammals.
- Contains alvar sites, an extremely rare ecosystem occurring in only five countries across the globe.

The vast Saskatchewan River Delta (SRD) encompasses a plethora of wetland ecosystems and forests that provide critical habitat for numerous species, including several at-risk plants, birds, and mammals. The flourishing waters provide the breeding, staging, and molting ground for over 500,000 migratory birds across the continent and thus is designated as a global Important Bird Area (IBA). This iconic landscape has been home to Indigenous Peoples for over 7,000 years and is the traditional territory of Cumberland House Cree Nation and the homeland of the Métis. The land has been an important provider of valued resources that are cherished by surrounding communities and other users worldwide. Important cultural and economic activities still take place today such as hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, ecotourism, sustainable forestry practices, local employment, and more.

Although the Delta has been an important provider, locals have noticed certain species populations (i.e., moose and muskrat, among others) have drastically decreased in recent years. Many have noticed an overall decline in the health of the Delta which coincides with upstream developments. The levels and flow of water into the Delta has diminished, impacting the biodiverse array of species and the Indigenous culture and livelihoods of those that live there. The Delta is slowly dying, and the traditional way of life for many is changing. As a global carbon sink, a water filtration system, a host of all kinds of biodiversity, the Delta needs to be conserved for the benefit of all.

Approximately 500,000 hectares of the Saskatchewan portion of the Saskatchewan River Delta are currently being proposed to be nominated as a [Ramsar Wetland of International Importance](#). Though Ramsar does not offer protection to the proposed area, it would raise international awareness of the area and endorse the Delta as an ecologically- significant and important wetland throughout designation.