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Q43

"If rainforests and tropical forests are the lungs of the Earth, then surely wetlands function as its kidneys." Which one of the following functions of wetlands best reflects the above statement? (a) The water cycle in wetlands involves surface runoff, subsoil percolation and evaporation. (b) Algae form the nutrient base upon which fish, crustaceans, molluscs, birds, reptiles and mammals thrive. (c) Wetlands play a vital role in maintaining sedimentation balance and soil stabilization. (d) Aquatic plants absorb heavy metals and excess nutrients. Official key: D.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2022 · General Studies · 2 marks · Environment and Ecology
Environment, ecology, climate, biodiversity - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation

(a)

Water cycle. Hydrology, not the kidney metaphor.

(b)

Food web. Lungs/energy, not filtration.

(c)

Sediment and soil. A wetland job, but not the 'kidney' line as keyed.

(d) Official key

Plants absorbing heavy metals and excess nutrients. That is the filter / kidney function.

Summary

- **Official key is (d). Wetlands as 'kidneys' is the water-quality job:** plants and soils strip nutrients and metals. Runoff, food webs and bank stability are other wetland roles.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Ramsar

Wetlands of international importance.

Phytoremediation

Plants taking up contaminants - the kidney analogue.

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