

FANIMAL'S ECOSYSTEM PROFILE SERIES

RIVERS/STREAMS

WHAT IS A RIVER/STREAM ECOSYSTEM?

A river/stream ecosystem is freshwater that flows in one direction, and is a part of the freshwater biome. Temperatures range from 39 degrees Fahrenheit to 71 degrees Fahrenheit. These flowing systems usually start in a spring, snowmelt, or lake and end in the ocean or a different body of water. This ecosystem can vary due to the flow of the water, light, and temperature.

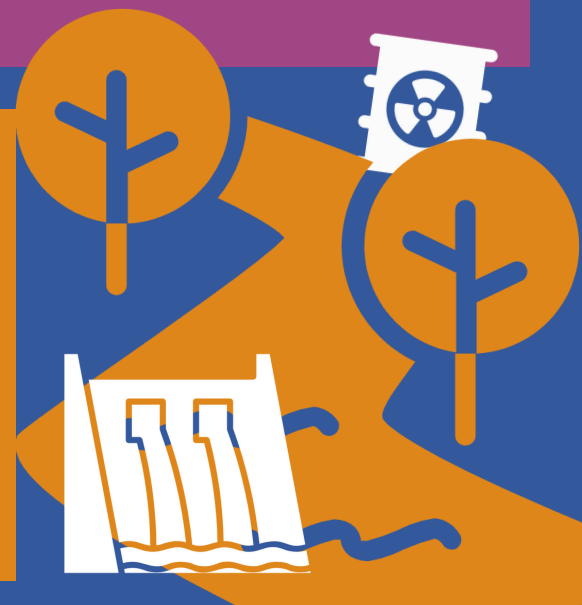


WHO LIVES IN A RIVER/STREAM ECOSYSTEM?

There are a variety of species that reside in the river/stream ecosystem. Starting from the smallest, bacteria, who recycle organic matter for plants to survive. Many insects, like the mayfly, are present in healthy streams and rivers. Larger species like fish, beavers, birds, turtles, even hippos find homes within this ecosystem.

ISSUES IN A RIVER/STREAM ECOSYSTEM

Water quality is one of the biggest issues present in rivers and streams. Pollution can come from many different places. One being from agriculture, where fertilizers, pesticides, and animal waste get washed by rain into waterways. Dams also negatively impact this ecosystem by disrupting natural migratory species like fish, and create slow bodies of water which can increase deadly algae blooms.



POLICIES IN A RIVER/STREAM ECOSYSTEM

The Clean Water Act in the United States has helped restore water quality in rivers by monitoring point sources (areas where pollution directly enters a waterway), however non-point sources are not monitored and are still releasing pollution into rivers and streams. The Nile Basin Initiative considers both humans and the river when managing this river in a more sustainable way. In China, the Yangtze River Economic Belt was created to lessen pollution into the river from industries.



WHAT YOU CAN DO!

The best thing you can do to help this ecosystem is to educate yourself on your own local waterways. Know what the biggest pollutants are, lessen your water use, and learn what can and can't be processed at the wastewater facility near you. Also, clean up trash you find around your community to ensure this won't end up in rivers and streams later on.

