Name Date

Freshwater Fish

About 40% of all fish live in freshwater habitats. These aquatic homes carry little to no salt, and freshwater fish have bodies adapted to ponds, lakes, and rivers. Because these pockets of fresh water are scattered across the world there are many rare species of freshwater fish that live only in certain locations.

Physiologically, freshwater fish are very different when compared to their saltwater cousins. A freshwater fish's body is made specifically to keep salts in their body, since their watery homes only contain about 0.05% salinity (dissolved salt content in water) or less. Their gills spread gasses into their bodies and protect their own salt levels. The aquatic vertebrae's kidneys help keep salts from leaving the body, even when a fish excretes. A freshwater fish's scales are also designed to reduce the amount of water soaking through the skin.

There are a few species of fish that migrate to spawn, from the sea to fresh water. Salmon and trout are two examples of these fish. Eels, on the other hand, are born in the sea and live out their adult lives in fresh water. Trouts, salmon, eels, and other migratory fish have bodies that adapt to different levels of salinity during different stages of their lives. When a salmon is born, it spends its first growing years in a fresh water pond. When a salmon grows, it makes its journey to the salty pastures of the ocean.

About what percentage of freshwater fish are there in the world?

About 40%.

How are freshwater fish different from saltwater fish?

Their bodies are made to protect their internal salt levels. Their scales are designed to reduce how much water soaks through their skin.

What does salinity mean?

Salinity is the saltiness, or amount of salt, in water.

What are some examples of migratory fish?

Salmon, trout, and eels.