

River Wildlife Answers



STURGEON

Hudson River

Sturgeon are a prehistoric kind of fish, dating back to the dinosaurs, with bony plates around their body rather than scales. They were plentiful in the Hudson River until overfishing in the 1900s. However, their populations are now growing.

HUMPBACK CHUBFISH

Colorado River

The Humpback Chubfish is native only to the Colorado River. It thrives in the fast moving waters, but damming of the Colorado River has destroyed much of its habitat and it is now an endangered species.

SALMON

Columbia River

Salmon are born in rivers, live in the ocean, and then return to the river they were born in, swimming upstream, to spawn. Salmon are an important part of the ecosystem in the Pacific Northwest, but damming of the Columbia River has cut off their return to spawning grounds and reduced their population.

FANSHELL MUSSEL

Ohio River

The Fanshell Mussel is one of hundreds of native mollusks in American rivers. Like many other species, it is now endangered.

RIVER OTTER

Cuyahoga River

River Otters are a mammal, related to the Weasel, that spend most of their time in the water. They are in many rivers throughout the United States and Canada. They are excellent swimmers and their diet is mostly fish.

OCELOT

Rio Grande

The Ocelot is a small wild cat. They are unusual among cat species for their excellent swimming abilities. The Rio Grande watershed is the only place they are found in the United States.

BLACK BEAR

Connecticut River

Black Bears are primarily foragers, eating plants and berries, but they are also excellent at fishing. They make their homes in the watersheds of rivers throughout much of the United States

GREAT BLUE HERON

Mississippi River

The Great Blue Heron is a large bird found in many American rivers. It wades in shallow waters and marshes, hunting for small fish. There are several species of Heron, and the Great Blue Heron is one of the largest.

GOOSE

Susquehanna River

The Goose is a common kind of waterfowl, a bird that spends equal time on land and in water. They are related to ducks and swans.

PELICAN

Missouri River

The Pelican is a kind of water bird, famous for the pouch under its beak where it holds fish. Some hunt by scanning the waters from the sky and then diving down; others hunt just on the surface of the water, scooping up fish into their beak.

BALD EAGLE

Potomac River

The Bald Eagle is famous as the symbol of the United States, but for many years it was an endangered species. Populations have grown since, but they are still a rare sight.

MANATEE

St Johns River

Manatees are large water mammals, found in the warm waters around the Caribbean. They can be as long as 13 feet, and weigh 1,300 pounds. They are primarily plant eaters, spending much of their time grazing sea plants in shallow waters.