

## 29. "The Freshwater Habitat"

by Core Knowledge Staff



A lake is an area of water that is surrounded by land. There is a lot of water in the world; in fact, water covers most of the earth's **surface**. But, only a tiny part of the world's water is freshwater, the kind of water you can drink.

Freshwater is found in streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds. The water in these streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds comes from rain and from melting ice and snow. Isn't it amazing to think that the water from the drinking fountain at school or from the **faucets** in your house all comes from rain?



Freshwater habitats have many kinds of fish, birds, insects, and other animals. Some lakes have water lilies. A water lily is a plant that lives in water near the edges of ponds and lakes. Plants are important in freshwater habitats because they make oxygen for animals to breathe. Plants are also food for the animals to eat, and they can provide shelter to protect animals from their predators. The leaves of the water lily are very large, round, and green, and they float on the surface of the water. The water lily is well adapted for living in this habitat. The lily's large leaves let it get as much sunlight as it needs for food and energy.



Lilies are also food for many animals. Animals—like deer, porcupines, beavers, and turtles—all eat the leaves, while ducks and geese like to eat their roots. Some animals, like fish and frogs, use the lily leaves as hiding places, and the flowers bring bees and other insects.



Another plant that lives in lakes is called a cattail. This plant gets its name from the unusual way it looks. Cattails have long, thin stems with foot-long, furry, flower spikes at the top that turn from green in the early summer to brown in the fall. The flower spike feels soft and furry and looks a little like a cat's tail. The plants can reach up to nine feet in height, which lets them get as much sunlight as they need.

As with water lilies, some animals use cattails for food and shelter. Muskrats and geese like to eat the roots of the cattail, and the juicy green shoots are a favorite of moose and elk. Many kinds of birds make their homes among the cattails. Cattails grow so thickly, so it's a good place for birds to build their nests and to lay and hatch their eggs. Predators like snakes and frogs also live among the cattails and search for animals like birds and insects for food.

**Word Count: 434**



Muskrat



Geese

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Questions

### “The Freshwater Habitat”

*Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:*

1. **Literal** Where does freshwater come from?
  - » rain and melting ice and snow
2. **Literal** Why are plants important in the freshwater habitat?
  - » They make oxygen for animals to breathe; they provide shelter to animals; they provide food to animals.
3. **Evaluative** Why might the freshwater habitat be described as active?
  - » Many plants and animals live there.