

Water Conservation Video Glossary

This Glossary was developed with third, fourth, and fifth graders in mind.

Amphibian: Amphibians are cold-blooded animals with backbones; the adults breathe air with their lungs, and can also breathe through their moist skin. Amphibians, such as frogs or toads, live on land and in water. When reproducing, amphibians lay their eggs in water. The eggs hatch into gill-breathing larval – like tadpoles, and later develop into adults with lungs.

Aquatic: Plants and animals that live near or in the water most or all of their lives.

Bay: A large area of water that is partially surrounded by land but opens to an ocean or lake. San Francisco Bay is a body of water with an opening that leads to the Pacific Ocean. (see estuary)

Chemical: A pure substance or a product which is often prepared or created by humans. Many chemicals can hurt the environment or people if they are inhaled, eaten, or absorbed through the skin.

Chlorine: A chemical that is often added to water to kill bacteria, but may also harm wildlife.

Climate: The long-term weather patterns in a place or region.

Community: A group of plants and animals that live in the same area and interact with each other.

Compost: A decaying and rotting mixture of plants or plant food leftovers (such as leaves, grass, fruit, vegetables etc.) that is used in the garden to improve soil health and promote the growth of plants.



Conservation: The careful use of natural resources (such as trees, oil, and water) to prevent them from being wasted, depleted, or damaged.

Dam: A wall that is built across a river or stream to slow the natural flow of water. Dams serve to control floods, store water for people, and often produce hydroelectric energy.



Delta: The area where rivers meet and join, or where one major river begins to ‘spit off’. In California, the largest is the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers meet to drain into the San Francisco Bay. This region includes many kinds of habitats—riparian, marsh, river, agricultural lands, grassland, and estuary.

Disease: An illness which impacts people, plants, or animals.

Drainpipe: A pipe that carries water and liquid waste away from buildings and streets.

Drip tubing: A method of watering plants that saves water. A small hose or tube is laid on the ground or buried just under the surface of the soil. The tube has small holes in it, allowing water to drip out slowly.

Drought: A long period of time during which an area that usually has precipitation gets very little to no rain, or snow.

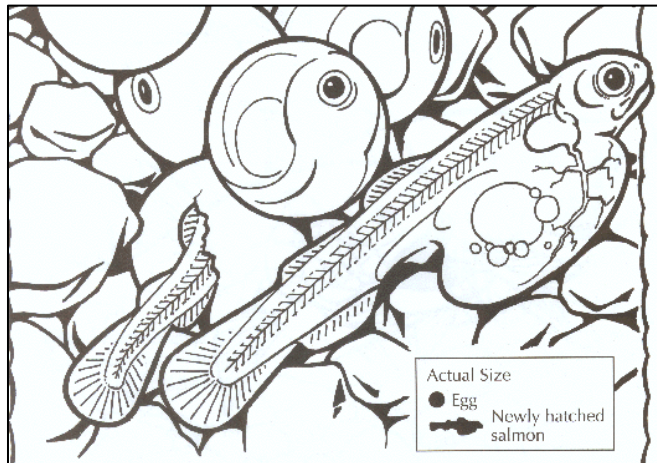
Electricity: A form of energy that is carried through wires and is used to operate machines, lights, appliances, etc. Electricity has many sources.

Estuary: An area where a river flows into the sea and there is a mixing of salt water and freshwater. Estuaries are important habitat for fish, birds, and other animals.

Evaporation: Water dries up when the sun heats it and turns it into vapor or steam. The water vapor or steam leaves the river, lake, ocean, or land, and rises into the atmosphere.

Food Chain: Food energy is transferred from one living thing to another. Every organism can be thought of as a link in a chain. For example, insects eat plants, salmon eats insects, and otters eat salmon.

Gravel: Consists of small rocks. The life-cycle of a salmon begins when eggs are laid in the gravel habitat along river or stream banks. When the eggs hatch, the *alevin* stage of the salmon develops in the gravel, growing into small fish which then leave the gravel to feed on plankton in the rivers.



Groundwater: water within the earth that supplies wells and springs. Geological formations called aquifers hold and contain groundwater.

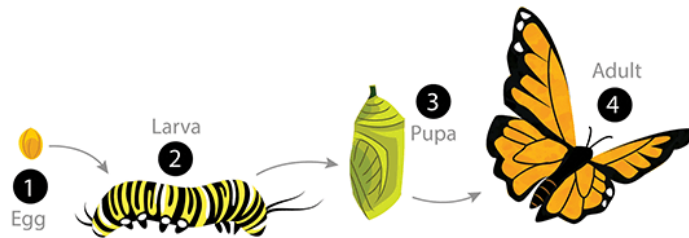
Habitat: The place where an animal lives. A habitat provides the animal with food, water, shelter, and space. There are many different types of habitats around the world, including rivers, forests, grasslands, mountains, and deserts. Different habitats are home to different animals.

Hydroelectric/Hydro-power: Energy that comes from the force of moving water, usually from a dam. The word "hydro" means water.

Irrigation: Man-made ways of taking water from its source to an area that would normally be dry. For example, sprinklers and hoses are ways to irrigate a farm or garden.

Lifestyle: A particular way of living, the way a person lives or a group of people live.

Metamorphosis: A major change in the form or structure of all insects and some animals, which happens as the insect or animal becomes an adult. For example, when a frog hatches from its egg it is a tadpole, but later it changes into a frog.



Migration: To travel a large distance from one area or region to another at different times of the year.



Mulch: A material made from various organic ingredients such as leaves, bark, or compost. Mulch is spread around or over plants to enrich, insulate, and protect the soil and plants. Mulch is also used to limit the amount of evaporation that happens. Mulch allows the plants and soil to stay cool and moist.

Native: refers to animals or plants that naturally occur in an area.

Native plants: Plants that have always lived here rather than those brought here by humans. Over time, native plants have adapted to the local temperatures, water availability, and soil types (among other things.)

Non-Native: A non-native organism is one that has been introduced or brought into a new area to live by people.

Organism: A living thing such as an animal, plant, fungus, or bacteria.

Oxygen: A gaseous element that is found in the air. It has no color, taste, or smell, and it is a main building block for life on Earth. Sometimes oxygen is used as another word for "air."



Predator: An animal that kills and eats other animals.

Prey: Animals that are killed and eaten by other animals.

Reptile: Cold-blooded, air-breathing vertebrates having skin covered with scales or bony plates, true claws (if they have legs), and lay soft-shelled leathery eggs. Most common examples are tortoises, turtles, lizards, snakes, alligators, and crocodiles.

Riparian: The community or habitat of plants living along or near a stream, river, or body of water. It is usually a type of woodland habitat.

Runoff: Water that drains or flows off the surface of the land (including streets).

Salmon: A large fish that is hatched in streams or rivers, but lives most of its life in the ocean, before returning to spawn in rivers.



Sediment: Material such as stones, soil, and sand that is carried into water by wind or water. The "dirt" that falls to the bottom of the river is called, "sediment."



Showerhead: The nozzle that sprays water on you when you are in the shower. A low flow showerhead decreases the amount of water that comes out so you use less.

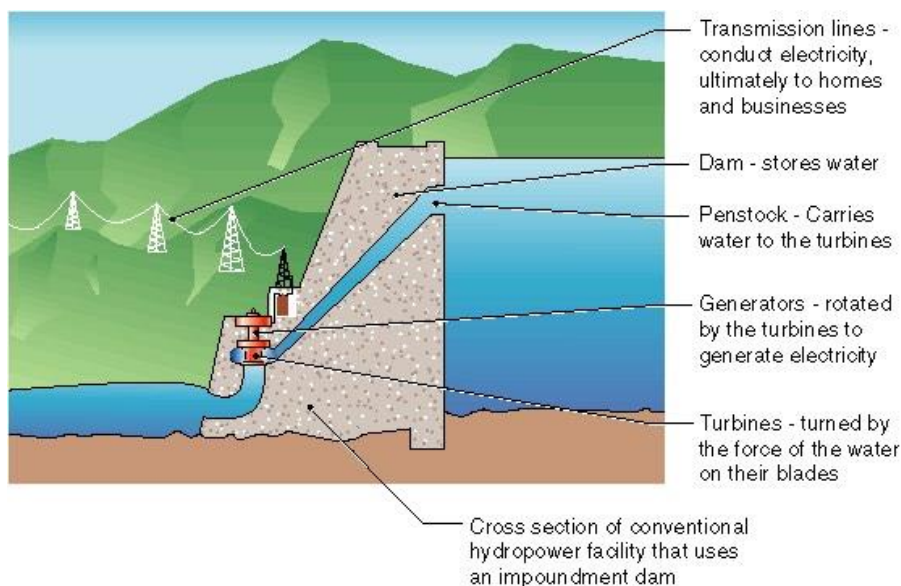
Snowmelt: Melting snow produces water that flows over the surface of the ground into streams and rivers.

Spawning: The process where some aquatic animals release and deposit sperm and eggs into the water for reproduction.

Species: A population of individuals that are more or less alike and are able to breed and produce fertile offspring under natural conditions.

Storm drain: A system of large pipes designed to drain extra rain and surface water from paved streets, parking lots, sidewalks, and roofs. There is often a grate on the street that covers the drain pipe. Storm drains usually lead to creeks or rivers.

Turbine: An engine with large blades that spin when water flows through them. At dams, they transform the energy from the water to electricity and provide energy for houses, hospitals, and schools. Windmills are another kind of turbine that captures the energy from the wind.



Water Conservation: The use of water-saving methods to reduce the amount of water needed for homes, lawns, farming, and industry. By conserving water people can save money, live better, and help the natural world.

Water Cycle: The continuous circulation of water in systems throughout the planet, involving condensation, precipitation, runoff, evaporation, and transpiration.

Watershed: The land area from which surface runoff drains into stream channel, lake, reservoir, or other body of water; also called a drainage basin.

Wildlife: Animals that are not tamed or domesticated, including, but not limited to: insects, spiders, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians, and mammals.