

River Ecology Word Search

R V E H T B E N T H I C V W O
E W A T E R Q U A L I T Y T T
C T P I H P I I V V A E Y U T
R H E P B M E B F L Z H F R E
E A Y X W O S L U L J I I T R
A B E L E L R M A T O M S L I
T I W T B L I X U G A W H E P
I T O J B U V L W L I R I U I
O A K J E S E R L H A C Y N T
N T W O D K R I V E R B E D G

Word Bank

River

Benthic

Flowing

Tributary

Flowing

Recreation

Turtle

Habitat

Mollusk

Fish

Riverbed

Webbed

Water Quality

Otter

Turn the page to learn more about these cool river ecology terms! →

CHICAGO
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES

PEGGY NOTEBAERT
NATURE
MUSEUM

Reading About Rivers

Use this as a read aloud with your young scientist to become familiar with the terms in the word search!

Did you know that there are over 87, 110 miles of rivers and streams in Illinois? That's a lot! Each **river** has plants and animals that live in and around it. This group of plants and animals comprises what is called a river's **habitat**. River habitats can vary, or be different, depending on the characteristics of the river: how big or small the river is, how deep or shallow it is, whether it moves fast or slow.

The **riverbed**—the bottom part of a river—is called the **benthic** zone. This is where you'll find freshwater mussels and crayfish. Some **mollusks** can live in fast moving water whereas others like slow, shallow, protected areas. Animals that swim or float in the water, such as **fish**, frogs, and **turtles**, occupy the **pelagic** zone, where the water **flows**. Other animals may live around rivers. **River otters** are fantastic swimmers—think of their **webbed** feet! Ducks, egrets, and other birds find food and make their nests around river habitats. They are also a much needed resting place for migrating bird species.

Rivers are important habitats for people too. Have you ever walked along a river to explore its banks? Or went fishing? **Recreational** activities such as canoeing and fishing are just a few of the ways people interact with rivers.

River health impacts the diversity of plants and animals in and around the river, or how many different species live there. A healthy river supports a web of mollusks and fish, amphibians and reptiles, insects, birds, and mammals. River health also impacts flood control measures and ground **water quality**.

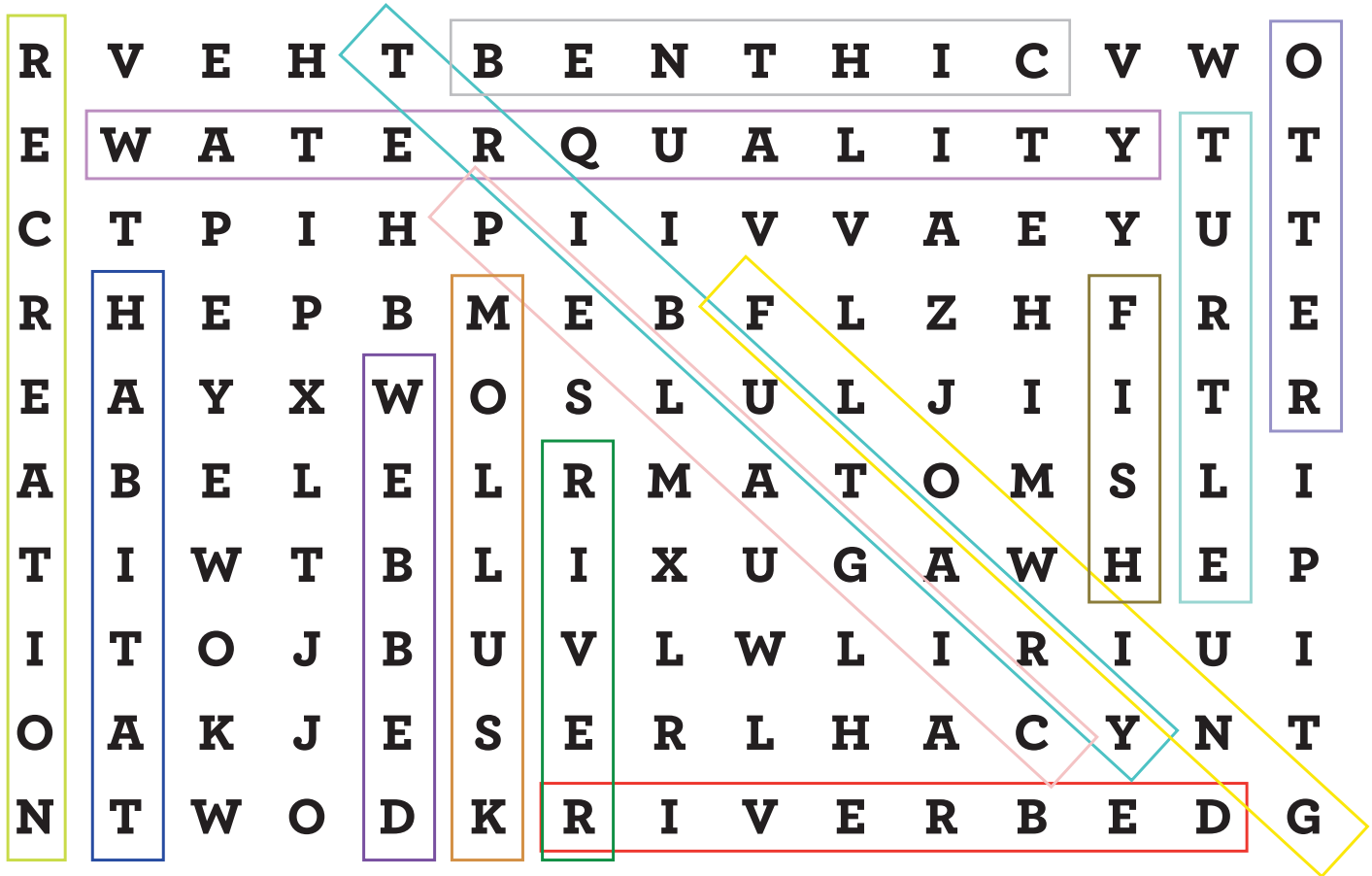
Do you live near a river or a **tributary** (a smaller creek or river that feeds into a larger river)? Illinois River, North Branch Chicago River, South Branch Chicago River, Des Plaines River, Salt Creek, are some of the larger rivers in the Chicago area. What animals have you seen along a river?

Draw a river diagram below!

Include terms from the passage & word search.

River Ecology Word Search

Answer Key



Word Bank

River

Benthic

Flowing

Tributary

Pelagic

Recreation

Turtle

Habitat

Mollusk

Fish

Riverbed

Webbed

Water Quality

Otter