AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS



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An aquatic environment is a habitat—or home—for plants and animals that is completely covered in water.
Because there are different types of water on Earth, there are two main kinds of aquatic environments:

- **Freshwater: Water without salt, like rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams. Frogs, ducks, and catfish love living here.**
- **Saltwater (Marine): Huge bodies of salty water, like oceans and seas. Whales, sharks, sea turtles, and colorful coral reefs call this home.**





Rivers

Trinidad has **hundreds of rivers originating mostly in the Northern Range and central regions**, ranging from major waterways to smaller forest streams.

Major Rivers in Trinidad

- **Ortoire River:** The longest river in Trinidad and Tobago at approximately 47 km.
- **Caroni River:** The second-longest river (about 44 km), originating in the Northern Range as the Aripo River, flowing through the Caroni Plains, and emptying into the Gulf of Paria at the Caroni Swamp. It supplies drinking water via the Caroni-Arena Dam.
- **Oropouche River:** One of the major eastern rivers, stretching about 41 km

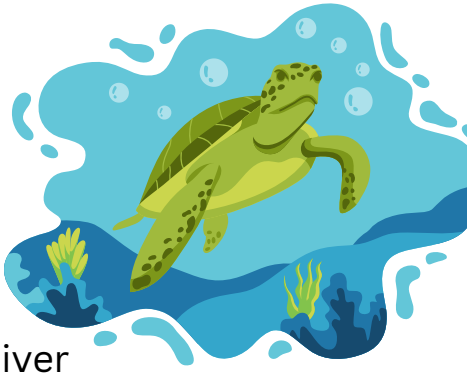




Fun Fact

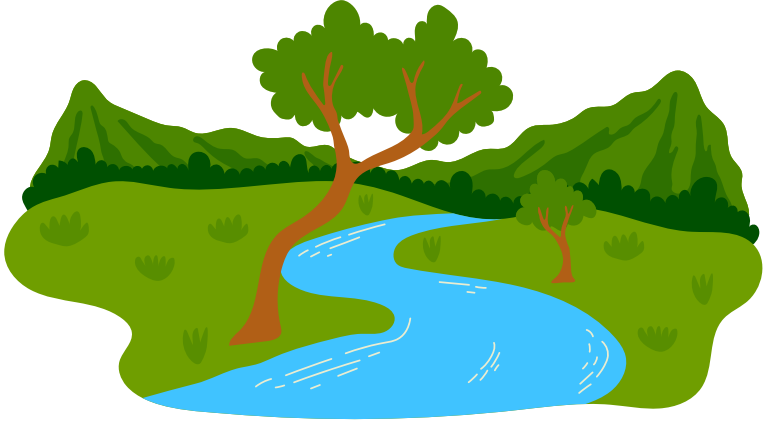
There are approximately 48 rivers in Trinidad and 15 rivers in Tobago. Do you know the names of any of them?

Rivers in Trinidad



- Caroni River
- Lalland River
- Oropouche River
- Salybia River
- Mathura River
- Maracas River
- Shark River
- Caura River
- Valencia River
- Caparo River
- Marchine River
- Hondo River
- Maraval River
- Poole River
- Blue Basin River
- Diego Martin River
- San Juan River
- St. Joseph River
- Covigne River Gorge
- Marianne River
- Yarra River
- Chaguaramas River
- Moruga River
- Maturita River
- Pilote River
- Jack River
- Santa Cruz
- Tunapuna River
- Macoya/Trantrill River
- Tacarigua River
- Arouca River
- Oropuna River
- Mausica River
- Arima River
- Talparo River
- Tumpuna River
- Guanapo River
- El Mamo River
- Aripo River
- Cumuto River
- Guayamare River
- Couva River
- Guaracara River
- Tarouba River
- Cipero River
- Guapo River
- Cunupia River
- Ravine Sable River

Rivers in Tobago



- Courland River
- Coffee River
- Castara River
- Bloody Bay River
- Cook River (Tobago)
- Bacolet River
- Sandy River
- Hillsborough West River
- Hillsborough East River
- Goldsborough River
- Richmond River (Great Dog River)
- Belle River
- Roxborough River
- Queens River
- Kings Bay River

River Animals (Moving Water)

Animals here are strong swimmers or love hunting along the rushing, rocky banks.

- **Guppies & Cascadura:** Small freshwater fish that swim in streams and rivers across Trinidad.
- **River Otters:** Playful, furry swimmers that love gliding through fast water and sliding down muddy riverbanks.
- **Crayfish (River Shrimp):** Tiny crustaceans that hide under smooth river rocks.
- **Kingfishers:** Colorful birds that perch on branches over the river and dive down fast to catch fish.

Definitions

RIVER

A river is a long, flowing ribbon of fresh water that moves across the land. It usually starts high up in the hills or mountains and travels all the way down until it meets a larger body of water, like the ocean.

Think of it like: A watery highway that is always moving! (Like the Caroni River or Caura River in Trinidad).

POND

A pond is a small, quiet body of fresh water surrounded by land on all sides. Unlike a river, the water in a pond stays still instead of flowing, and it is shallow enough for sunlight to reach the bottom so underwater plants can grow.

Think of it like: A giant nature puddle where frogs, dragonflies, and small fish love to hang out.

Pond Animals (Still, Quiet Water)

Animals here love calm water where they can float, hop on lily pads, and lay eggs safely.

- **Frogs & Tadpoles: Amphibians that start as swimming tadpoles and grow legs to hop between the water and the grassy shore.**
- **Dragonflies: Bright, buzzing insects that zoom over the water looking for mosquitoes to eat.**
- **Freshwater Turtles: Shelled reptiles that love sunning themselves on logs poking out of the calm water.**
- **Ducks: Birds with webbed feet that paddle across the surface and dip their heads under for snacks.**

SWAMP

A swamp is a wet, soggy forest where trees and bushes grow right out of the muddy, shallow water. The ground is soaked like a giant sponge, making it a cozy, shady home for lots of special animals.

Think of it like: A flooded forest where Scarlet Ibises, caimans, and crabs live! (Like the Caroni Swamp or Nariva Swamp)

Swamp Animals (Flooded Forest)

Animals here are great at climbing mangrove roots, wading through deep mud, or hiding in shady trees.

- **Scarlet Ibis: Bright red birds with long curved beaks that wade in the mud for crabs and sleep in swamp trees.**
- **Spectacled Caiman: Alligator cousins that float quietly in the dark, murky water with only their eyes peeking out.**
- **Blue & Fiddler Crabs: Scuttling crabs that dig burrows in the wet, muddy floor among tree roots.**
- **Tree Boas & Iguanas: Reptiles that curl up high in the branches of swamp trees right above the water.**



MARINE ENVIRONMENTS

A marine environment is the huge, salty water world made up of the Earth's oceans and seas. Unlike rivers and ponds that have fresh water, marine water tastes salty and covers most of our planet!

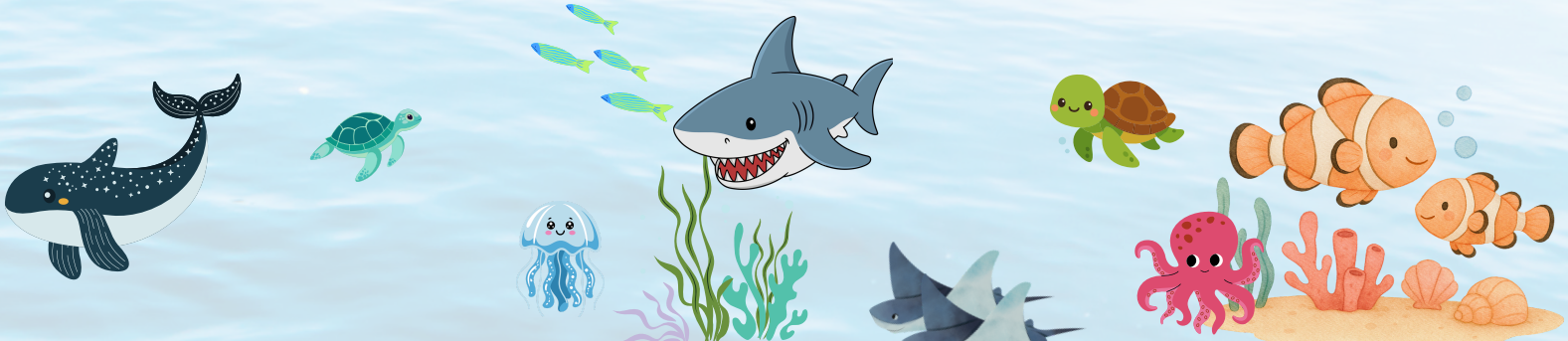
Think of it like: A giant underwater neighborhood with sandy beaches, colorful coral reefs, and deep, dark ocean waters—just like the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean surrounding Trinidad and Tobago.

Animals That Live in a Marine Environment



Marine animals have special bodies that help them breathe, swim, and live in salty water:

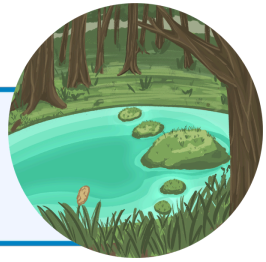
- **Sea Turtles (like Leatherback & Hawksbill Turtles): Giant ocean reptiles with flippers instead of feet that swim for miles and come ashore on beaches like Grande Riviere to lay eggs.**
- **Dolphins: Smart, playful marine mammals that breathe air through a blowhole on top of their heads and travel in groups called pods.**
- **Coral Reef Fish (like Parrotfish & Angelfish): Brightly colored fish that dart in and out of rocky coral reefs (like Buccoo Reef in Tobago) to find food and hide from predators.**
- **Sharks & Stingrays: Smooth-skinned ocean swimmers; stingrays glide flat along the sandy seafloor, while sharks patrol open waters.**
- **Octopuses & Jellyfish: Soft-bodied sea creatures with no bones—octopuses use eight arms to squeeze into rocky caves, and jellyfish drift gently with the ocean waves.**
- **Whales: The biggest animals on Earth, including Humpback Whales that sometimes swim through the warm waters near Trinidad and Tobago.**





Water Habitats Explorer Worksheet

Rivers, Ponds & Swamps of Trinidad & Beyond)



Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Part 1: Fill in the Blanks



Word Bank: River | Pond | Swamp | Moving | Still

1. A _____ is a long ribbon of fresh water that flows from the hills toward the ocean.
2. A _____ is a wet, soggy forest where mangrove trees grow right out of muddy water.
3. A _____ is a small, quiet body of water surrounded by land on all sides.
4. Water in a river is always _____ , while water in a pond stays _____ .

Part 2: "Where Do I Live?" Animal Matching

Draw a line from each animal clue on the left to its matching habitat on the right!

Animal Clue		Habitat
1. Scarlet Ibis: "I am bright red and poke my long beak into swamp mud for crabs."	●	
2. Frog: "I start as a swimming tadpole in calm, shallow water before hopping onto a lily pad."	●	● POND
3. Guppy: "I am a tiny fish that loves swimming against the gentle current of clear streams."	●	
4. Spectacled Caiman: "I float quietly in dark, flooded forest water with just my eyes peeking out."	●	● SWAMP
5. Duck: "I use my webbed feet to paddle smoothly across quiet water that does not flow away."	●	● RIVER



Part 3: Draw the Habitats!

Draw one plant or animal inside each habitat box below:

1. River
(Flowing water, rocks, guppies, river ot ter)

2. Pond
(Still water, lily pads, frogs, dragonflies)

3. Swamp
(Trees in mud, Scarlet Ibis, caiman, crabs)

Parent / Teacher Answer Key:Part 1: 1. River | 2. Swamp | 3. Pond | 4. Moving, Still • **Part 2:** 1. Swamp | 2. Pond | 3. River | 4. Swamp | 5. Pond



