



The  
Rivers  
Trust

## Lesson 5

# What lives in and around a river?



With thanks to:



## Starter task:



What habitat is Scout looking at? What is it like?

Animals?

Plants?

Hot/ cold?

Dry/ wet?

Lots to eat?

Clean?

Places to hide?



Why do the fish and otter like living in this habitat?

## Know:

The living things that live in, and around a river

## Understand:

Why these living things live in and around the river

## Apply:

Investigate river species and their common characteristics



## Living things:

1. Match the description to the category
2. Sort the living things into the correct category



Which groups are found in and around rivers? Why?

Mammals	Plants	Birds	Invertebrates	Amphibians	Fish	Reptiles



a) Can make their own food from sunlight

b) Warm-blooded, with fur

c) Live in water, breathe through gills

d) Have wings, feathers and a beak/ bill

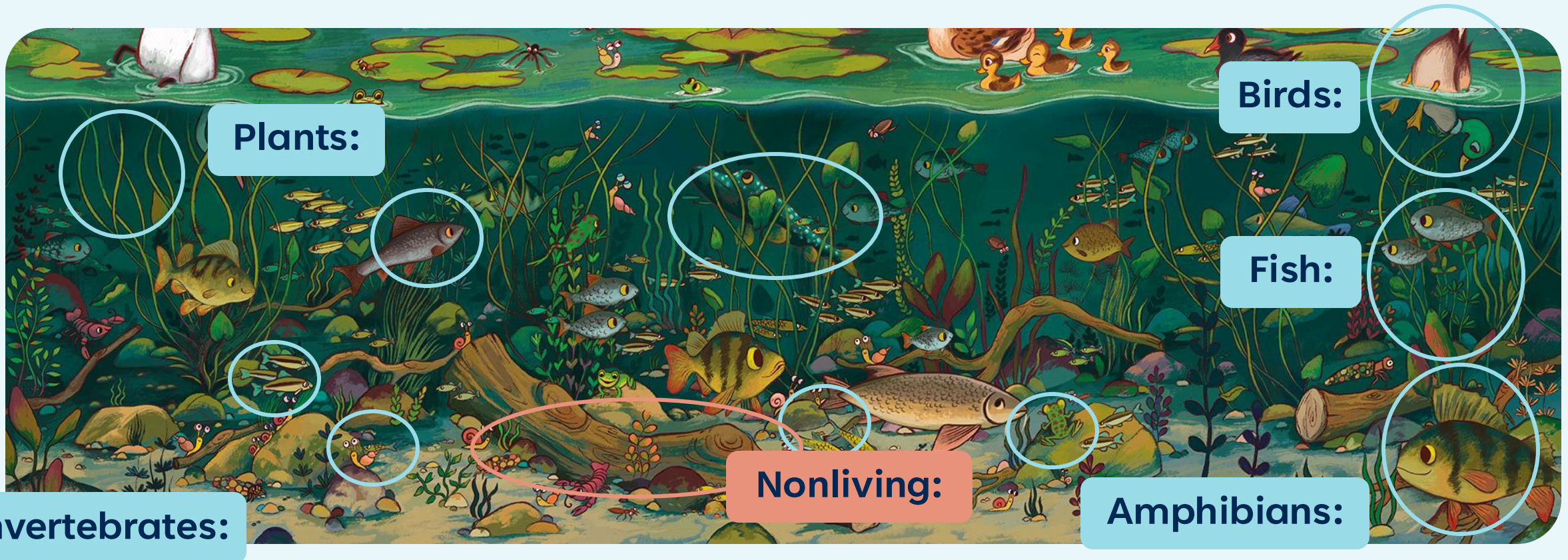
e) Live in both water and on land, they breathe through soft smooth skin

f) Dry scaly skin

g) Do not have a backbone

## Inside the river

Which groups of living things might you find inside the river?



- Can you see any nonliving things?
- How do the living and the nonliving things interact with each other?

## Inside the river

Scout investigates invertebrates inside the river; help her to pick out which common features they have. Some may describe other groups



Freshwater shrimp



Crayfish:



Mayfly Larvae:

1) They eat algae, insects, larva, plankton, eggs, and each other.

3) Some of their life cycle can be in water

5) They have gills that they use these to breathe underwater.

2) They have 3 pairs of legs, most of them have wings

4) They don't have a backbone, but they have an exoskeleton

6) They make oxygen and add it to the water



Why do you think invertebrates are important to the river habitat?

## Inside the river

Scout investigates invertebrates inside the river; help her to pick out which common features they have. **Answers**



Freshwater shrimp



Crayfish:



Mayfly Larvae:

1) They eat algae, insects, larva, plankton, eggs, and each other. **Fish**

3) Some of their life cycle can be in water. **Invertebrates**

5) They have gills that they use these to breathe underwater. **Fish**

2) They have 3 pairs of legs, most of them have wings. **Invertebrates**

4) They don't have a backbone, but they have an exoskeleton. **Invertebrates**

6) They make oxygen and add it to the water. **River plants**



Why do you think invertebrates are important to the river habitat?

## On and around the river

Imagine you are sat by the side of the river, what living things might you see, hear, smell, and feel?  
Close your eyes if you need to.

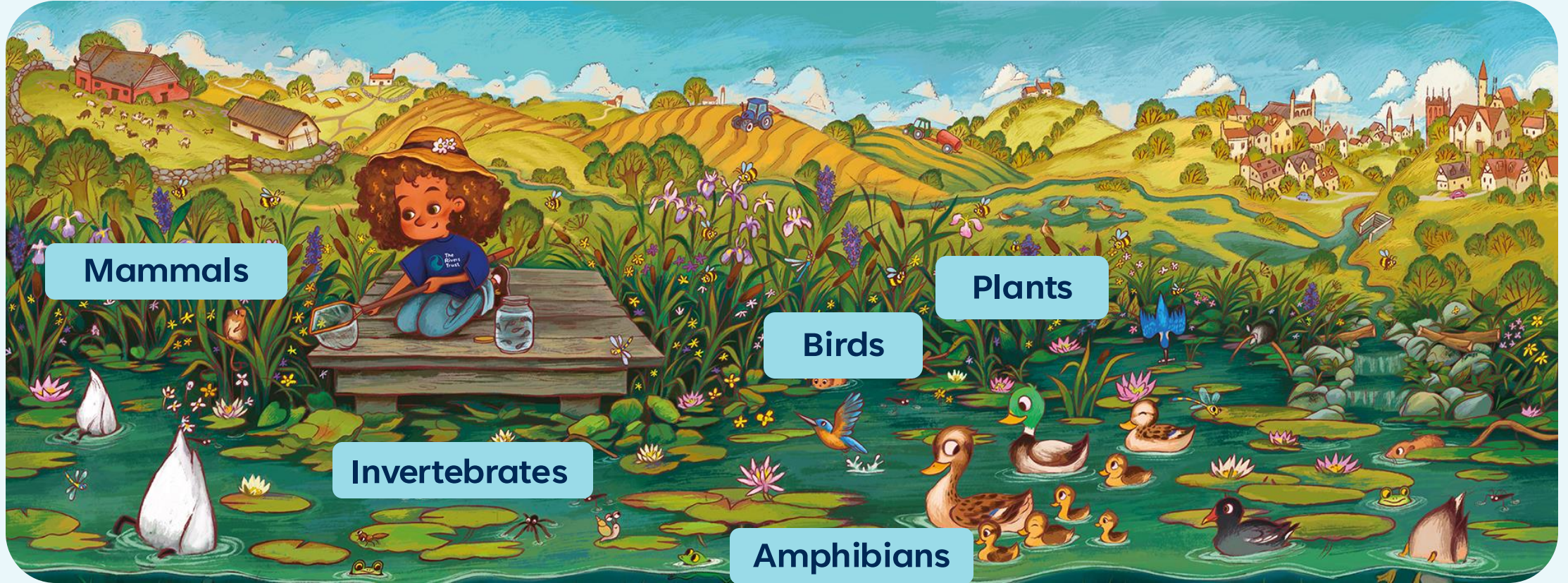


Why might these living things choose to live near to the river?



# On and around the river

What groups of living things might you see on and around the river, or up in the sky?



- Can you see any nonliving things?
- How do the living and the nonliving things interact with each other?

# Living things in and around rivers

Use the information cards and other sources to investigate the groups of living things found in rivers

1. Examples of the group
2. What are their common features?
3. What do they like to eat?
4. How are they adapted to living in/near a river?
5. Do you find them in your local river?



- How might these living things be in danger?
- How can we help them?



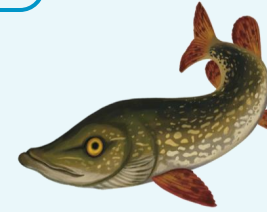


How many river animals can you name?

5. Mammals



4. Birds



3. Fish



2. Invertebrates



1. Amphibian



Can you name any plants that live in or near rivers?





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# What lives in and around a river?



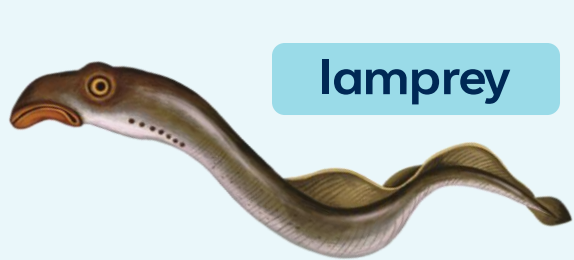
With thanks to:



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# River animals inside the river

**Fish** are animals that live in oceans or freshwater like lakes and rivers. They have gills that they use to breathe underwater and fins that they use to propel them forward and swim.



lamprey



salmon

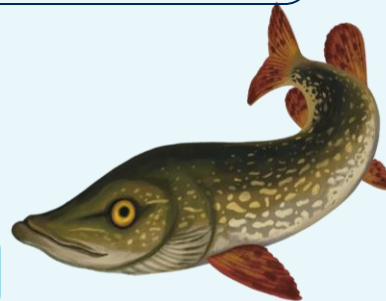
Their diet consists of algae, insects, larvae, plankton and eggs...and each other.



perch



stickleback



pike

**Invertebrates** are animals that do not have a spinal cord or backbone, but they have an exoskeleton. Some are found on land (**minibeasts**) like woodlice, beetles and worms. Those found in rivers are **freshwater invertebrates**.



Freshwater shrimp



Mayfly larvae



crayfish

They have 3 pairs of legs and some of them have wings. Some of their life cycle can be in water



# River animals around the river: Mammals



otter

**Mammals** such as otters, beavers and water voles can live both in and besides rivers. They have webbed feet to help them to swim well but are good on land too.

Otters mainly eat fish but sometimes small birds and water voles. Water voles are the most endangered mammal in the UK, they eat grass and water side plants.

Mammals also have hair or fur. Why might it be good for warm blooded animals to have thick fur?

Foxes and badgers often can be found around the riverbank getting a drink of water. Unlike otters they don't swim underwater.



fox

beaver



**Did you know?**  
Beavers and otters use wood from trees to make their homes. An otter's home is called a holt.

Water vole



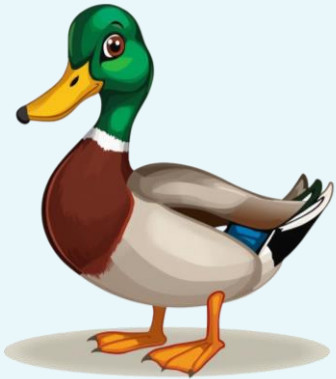
# River animals around the river: Birds and Amphibians

**Birds** like kingfishers and herons can be seen around rivers hunting for fish! Birds can be recognised by their feathers and beak. All birds are warm blooded and lay eggs.



kingfisher

Long beaks help fish to catch small fish and invertebrates in the water.



Other birds like geese, ducks, and moorhens are often found bobbing along the river. They spend most of their time in the water but come out on to the riverbank to sleep and lay their eggs!



**Amphibians** such as frogs, toads and even newts are often found in rivers. They all have moist, scale-less skin that they use to absorb water and oxygen  
There are 7 species of amphibian native to the UK including the great crested newt, natterjack toad and the common frog.

