

GLOSSARY

ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

ECOSYSTEM: A community of living organisms (plants, animals and microbes) in conjunction with the non-living components of their environment (things like air, water and mineral soil), interacting as a system.

BIODIVERSITY: The variety of different types of life found on earth. It is a measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems. This can refer to genetic variation, ecosystem variation, or species variation (number of species) within an area, biome, or planet.

NICHE: In ecology, a niche is a term describing the relational position of a species or population in an ecosystem.

RIVER TERMINOLOGY

SOURCE: The source of a river or stream is the original point from which the river flows. It may be a lake, a marsh, a spring or a glacier. This is where the stream starts. The source is the farthest point of the river stream from its estuary or its confluence with another river or stream.

MOUTH: The place where a river enters a lake, larger river, or the ocean is called its mouth.

TRIBUTARY: A tributary is a freshwater stream that feeds into a larger stream or river. The larger, or parent, river is called the mainstream.

CONFLUENCE: A confluence is a geography term used to describe where two or more bodies of water meet.

STREAM POWER: A term used to describe the relative energy a river is carrying at any given location, determining the net effect of erosion and deposition at that site.

FLUSH: Flushes are areas where water from underground flows out onto the surface to create an area of saturated ground, rather than a well-defined channel.

POINT BAR: Point bars are a classic example of habitat formation, which occur on the inside bend of meanders. As water travels around a bend, the water on the outside travels fastest, but on the inside water is slowed down. This loss of energy causes sediment to be deposited. Over time as this build-up of deposits continues the point bar extends and new habitat forms.

MID-CHANNEL BAR: Mid-channel bars form when river discharge is low and reduced flows take the easiest route downhill. Sediment is deposited in the river channel, accumulating over time. As a mid-channel bar forms, the flow is forced into the banks of the river, widening the section.

RIFFLES: Riffles are short, slow-moving stretches of water, which are shallow.