

Oceans, Lakes, Swamps, and Seas

What do oceans, swamps, seas, lakes, and streams all have in common? They are all bodies of water. A body of water is not called a body because it has arms and legs—it is a special collection of water. If you're lucky enough to live near a body of water, you might cross a river every day on

your way to school. Or go to the beach on hot summer days with your family. Or look for frogs and tadpoles in a stream or swamp.

But you might be surprised by the many kinds of bodies of water God made!

Lakes and Ponds

One of the most refreshing things to do on a hot summer day is jump into a cool, clear lake. Ponds are much smaller than lakes but are homes to many kinds of fish, ducks, and geese.

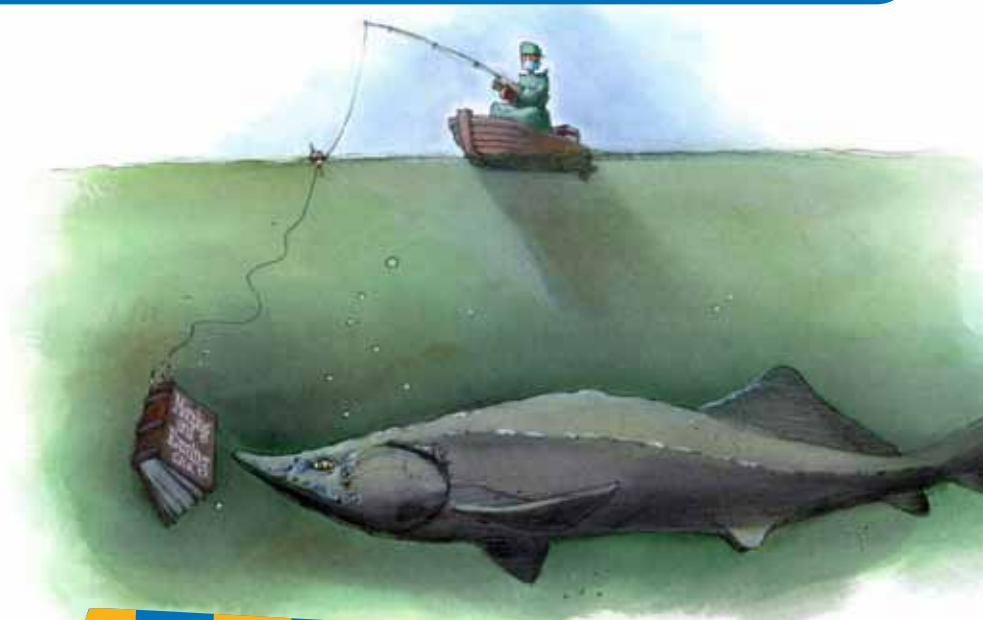
FuN FacTs

The largest lakes in North America are called the **Great Lakes**. These five lakes are the largest group of freshwater lakes in the world! How many can you name?

The **Caspian Sea** is the largest saltwater lake in the world. It is over 143,005 square miles in length (370 square kilometers) and 3,363 feet deep (1,025 square meters)!

CoOL CreATuREs

The **beluga sturgeon** is the largest freshwater fish—but it can also live in salt lakes like the Caspian Sea. These huge fishes can grow as long as 24 feet (8 meters) and weigh more than 3,500 pounds (1,600 kilograms). They can also live to be over 100 years old!



Bible Water Trivia

Our great God created the world with amazing power! Quiz your family and friends to see how many questions they can get before looking up the Bible verses for the answers.

- What is the name of the river where Moses' mother placed him in a basket when he was a little baby? (Exodus 2:5)
- What river did the Israelites cross to get to the Promised Land? (Joshua 1:2)
- What sea did Jesus walk on? (John 6:1, 16-21)
- Which disciple also walked on water to meet Jesus? (Matthew 14:29)
- What is the name of the sea that is so salty that plants and animals cannot live in it? (Numbers 34:3)

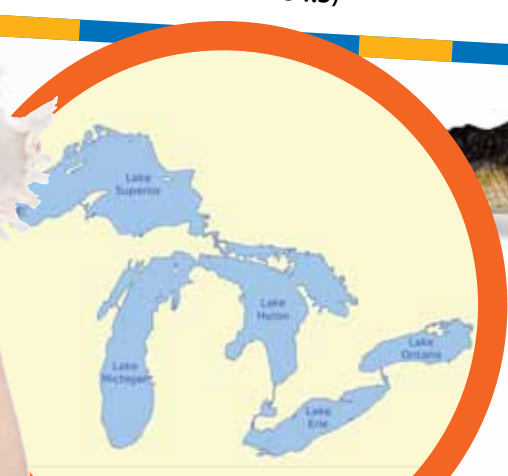


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY PHOTOS BY WIKIMEDIA



The Scoop on Swamps

Swamps are also called “wetlands” or “marshes” and are like shallow lakes. They provide a home for plants like lily pads, reeds, and algae, and for animals too. Freshwater swamps are home to snakes, frogs, and insects—and, in some parts of the world, alligators!

FuN FacTs

The world’s largest swamp is the **Pantanal**, which is in Brazil and reaches to parts of Bolivia and Paraguay. This huge swamp is bigger than the country of Greece! It is home to jaguars, giant anteaters, piranhas, howler monkeys, and green anacondas.

CoOL CreATuREs

There are around 10 million critters called **caimans** in the Pantanal. These alligator-like reptiles are much smaller than the American alligator. Caimans can grow up to 8 feet (almost 3 meters) long and weigh 128 pounds (58 kilograms). American alligators can grow as long as 15 feet long (5 meters) and weigh up to 500 pounds (226 kilograms)!



Rolling Rivers

A river is water that flows across land in a narrow passage. Many small streams called *tributaries* collect together to form rivers. They can move quickly or slowly and empty into a larger lake or ocean. Psalm 98:8 says, “Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy.”

FuN FacTs

The longest river in the world is the **Nile River** in Africa. It is about 4,258 miles (6,853 km) long! It runs through Egypt, Sudan, and nine other countries.

Some rivers are connected to the world’s most amazing waterfalls. One of them is the **Niagara River**, which flows into Niagara Falls in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and Niagara Falls, New York.

CoOL CreATuREs

In 2015 scientists in Thailand caught the world’s largest freshwater **stingray** in the Mae Klong River. It was 14 feet long (almost 5 meters) and almost 8 feet (2.5 meters) across. The giant ray weighed between 700 and 800 pounds (more than 300 kilograms)!

Try This at Home

Want to make your own tasty “swamp”? Here’s what you’ll need:

- two packages of vanilla pudding
- green or blue food coloring
- a 9 x 13 baking pan
- crushed Oreos
- small plastic toys like snakes, bugs, fish, turtles, and trees to decorate your swamp (wash these first)

Ask an adult to help you make the vanilla pudding in a large bowl. Add a few drops of food coloring and stir. Spread the pudding in a baking pan and layer the crushed Oreos on top as “dirt.” Add the animals and enjoy a tasty swamp!



Awesome Oceans

The five oceans on our planet cover about 71 percent of the earth. The clear-blue waters and powerful waves show us how awesome our God is. Psalm 93:3 says, “The seas have lifted up, Lord, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.”

FuN FacTs

If all the **salt** in the ocean were taken out and spread over all the dry land on Earth, the salt would be about 500 feet deep!

The Mariana Trench is the deepest ocean point in the world. It is **35,840 feet** deep!

Around **97 percent** of the Earth’s water is in the oceans. Wow!

The **blue whale** is the world’s largest sea animal. It can weigh up to 200 tons and measures as long as two 18-wheeler trucks!

CoOL CreATuREs

Which animal would you **NOT** find in the ocean?

- Anchovy
- Jellyfish
- Alligator
- Walrus

(answer: c)



Christin Baker is a stay-at-home mom and writer.