

Riparian Habitat



What is a riparian habitat?

The word “riparian” means “related to a river or stream.” Riparian habitat is any habitat that is influenced by a river or stream or adjacent to a lake. Riparian habitats include shallow backwaters; marshes and oxbow lakes in flood plains; meadows of sedges and rushes; willow flats; and strands of cottonwood trees.

Why are riparian habitats important?

In a dry climate like Wyoming has, water is a precious thing for nearly all living things. Riparian habitats offer shelter and food near water and attract many wild animals as a result. Birds and mammals often use riparian areas as routes for their migrations as well.

How are riparian habitats doing?

Riparian habitats are thin ribbons in the Wyoming landscape. They have never been very common in our state. Rivers attract people as well as wildlife, and human uses of riparian habitats can cause problems for animals in the river and along its banks. We should be careful with our riparian areas. They are important to people and wildlife alike.

Riparian Habitat Flashcards

Beaver



Moose



Mink



Bald Eagle



Osprey



Great Blue Heron



Riparian Habitat Flashcards

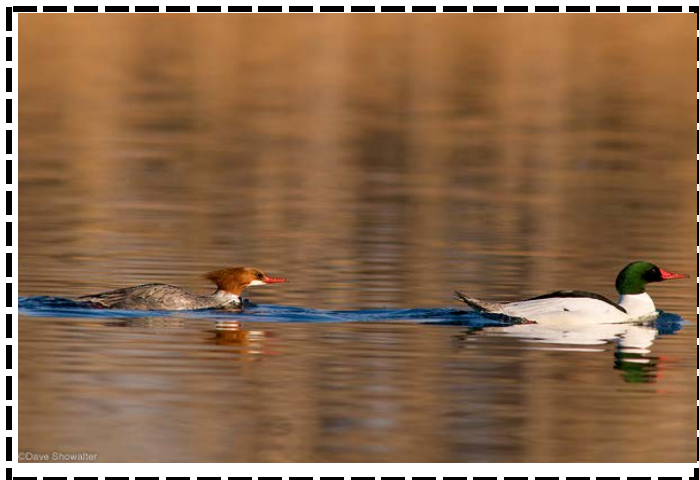
Yellow-headed Blackbird



American Dipper



Common Merganser



Yellow-billed Cuckoo



Common Snapping Turtle



Cutthroat Trout



Riparian Habitat Flashcards

Mayfly (larvae)



Mayfly (adult)



Plains Cottonwood



Willow



The Sun



Riparian Habitat Flashcards

Beaver

Name: Beaver
Scientific Name: *Castor canadensis*
Predators: Otter, mink, coyotes, raptors, humans (fur)
Prey or Food: Trees, roots

Did you know? Beavers teeth grow constantly to keep up with all the gnawing necessary for eating and gathering wood.

Moose

Name: Moose
Scientific Name: *Alces alces*
Predators: Bears, wolves, humans
Prey or Food: Willow, aquatic plants

Did you know? Moose can swim and even dive underwater.

Mink

Name: Mink
Scientific Name: *Mustela vison*
Predators: wolves, foxes, coyotes, raptors, humans (fur)
Prey or Food: mice, fish, frogs, crayfish

Did you know? Unlike its relative the weasel, the long bodied mink stays brown in winter.

Bald Eagle

Name: Bald Eagle
Scientific Name: *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Predators: Humans (Pesticides and Oil)
Prey or Food: Fish, mammals, birds

Did you know? These raptors were once endangered by pesticides, now they are increasing in numbers.

Osprey

Name: Osprey
Scientific Name: *Pandion haliaetus*
Predators: Humans (Pesticides and fishing lines)
Prey or Food: Fish

Did you know? Osprey are also called sea hawks.

Great Blue Heron

Name: Great Blue Heron
Scientific Name: *Ardea Herodias*
Predators: Coyotes, raccoons, reptiles eat eggs/young
Prey or Food: Fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals

Did you know? Herons use their sharp bills to impale their prey.

Yellow-headed Blackbird

Name: Yellow-headed Blackbird
Scientific Name: *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*
Predators: Humans (herbicides and pesticides), magpies, gulls
Prey or Food: Insects, seeds

Did you know? These birds often communicate with terns to keep watch for predators.

American Dipper

Name: American Dipper
Scientific Name: *Cinclus mexicanus*
Predators: Raptors, cats, fish
Prey or Food: Aquatic insects, flying insects

Did you know? Dippers get their name from how they are seen constantly dipping their heads in water for prey.

Common Merganser

Name: Common Merganser
Scientific Name: *Mergus merganser*
Predators: Raccoon, fox, snakes
Prey or Food: Aquatic insects, aquatic plants, seeds

Did you know? Sometimes ducklings catch a ride on their mamma's back.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Name: Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Scientific Name: *Coccyzus americanus*
Predators: Raptors
Prey or Food: Insects, caterpillars, seeds and fruit

Did you know? These secretive birds migrate to South America in the fall.

Common Snapping Turtle

Name: Common Snapping Turtle
Scientific Name: *Chelydra serpentina*
Predators: Humans, large mammals and reptiles will eat eggs
Prey or Food: Decaying plant and animal matter, fish, insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals

Did you know? These turtles "snap" as a defense because they are too large to fit inside their shells.

Cutthroat Trout

Name: Cutthroat Trout
Scientific Name: *Oncorhynchus* spp.
Predators: Other fish
Prey or Food: Aquatic insects

Did you know? These fish are named for the red marking under their jaw

Mayfly (larvae)

Name: Mayfly (larvae)
Scientific Name: *Baetis* spp.
Predators: birds, fish, amphibians
Prey or Food: aquatic plants and aquatic insects

Did you know? Adult mayflies have wings and live above water, the young live underwater.

Mayfly (adult)

Name: Mayfly (adult)
Scientific Name: *Baetis* spp.
Predators: Birds, fish, amphibians
Prey or Food: None (they only feed as larvae)

Did you know? These insects are often used as bait for fishing.

Plains Cottonwood

Name: Plains Cottonwood
Scientific Name: *Populus sargentii*
Predators: Moose, beaver
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? This is Wyoming's "State Tree."

Willow

Name: Willow
Scientific Name: *Salix* spp.
Predators: Moose, beaver
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? There are many types of willow in Wyoming, some are trees and others are short shrubs.

The Sun

Plants use the sun's energy to grow through a process known as photosynthesis. Because plants are the beginning of all food chains, all plants and animals transfer the sun's energy when they eat.