



Wetlands – Explore Outdoors

Name: _____

Wetlands are valuable to the health of our environment. They provide a home to diverse wildlife species and help with flood control as well as filtering out pollutants.

What animals would you see at a wetland?

There are a variety of animals you can find at a wetland, depending on where that wetland is located in the world. In North Carolina, you can find a range of animals from salamanders to beavers! Some animals like the dragonfly only spend a part of their life cycle in the water of wetlands before they grow wings and fly. Go outside your backyard and keep an eye out for any animals you think might spend time at a wetland. Draw or write down what you find.

How absorbent are wetlands?

Wetlands do a great job of storing water. When there are periods of excessive rain or flooding, wetlands absorb the excess water, thanks to their hydric soil and plants which hold water really well. Also, wetlands can slowly release water when there are times of little to no rainfall. However, some wetlands have been replaced with buildings or converted for commercial uses. The transition from undeveloped to developed land changes the function of the landscape and greatly reduces the flood storage capacities of the area. **Let's see how this works with an experiment.** Find materials you need for setting up two testing areas outside – one representing a wetland and one representing developed land. Think of absorbent materials (like soil or a sponge) you can use in your wetland and non-absorbent materials (like rocks or plastic) you can use in your developed area. Get creative! After completing construction of your two testing areas, pour the same amount of water over each and make observations. What happened? How do they compare? Record your observations in the space below.