

Activity 1: Put It On the Map!

Objective: Students will be able to locate some of the better-known regional wetland types on a U.S. map, learn a few facts about each of them, and distinguish one wetland habitat type from another.

Materials:

- U.S. wetlands map handout
- Wetland reference texts (optional)

Part I

Procedure

1. Review the information about different wetland types with students (in this chapter). Generate a discussion with students about what makes one wetland habitat different from another:
 - How are these wetlands distinguished from each other? (characteristic plants and wildlife found there)
 - What environmental factors might cause such differences? (climate, elevation, frequency & amount of water present)
 - What types of wetlands might be found in more than one location in the U.S.? (coastal wetlands, vernal pools, forested wetlands, scrub shrub swamps)
 - Do you know of any distinct types of wetlands that are unique to one region of the country? (see text in Chapter 2)
 - Do you think there are more inland or coastal wetlands in the U.S.? (inland – 95%, coastal – 5%)
2. Hand out copies of the U.S. wetlands map to each student. Have them try to locate the following regional wetland types on their maps:

Pocosins (North Carolina)

Bogs & Fens (northeast & north central states and Alaska)

Prairie Potboles (Minnesota and Dakotas)

Bottomland Hardwood Forests (southeastern states)

Wet Tundra (Alaska)

Tropical Rainforests (Hawaii)

Mangroves (southern Florida)

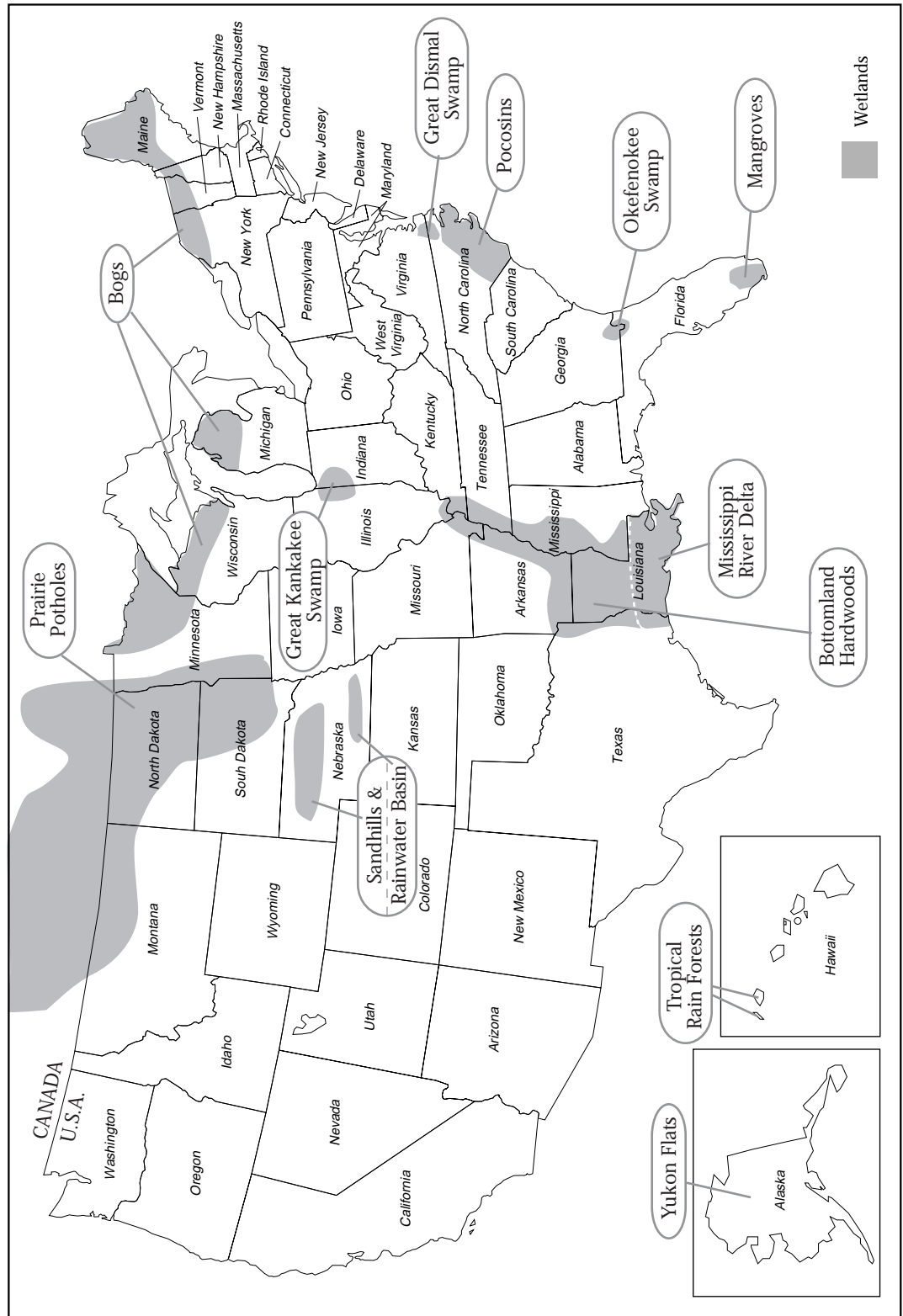
Great Kankakee Swamp (Indiana & Illinois)

Mississippi River Delta (Louisiana)

Great Dismal Swamp (Virginia & North Carolina)

Teacher's map

Activity 1: Wetland "Celebrities" of the United States



Procedure This *Wetlands Jeopardy* activity requires a more in-depth review of the history of well-known wetlands in the U.S.

1. Divide the class into teams. Assign each team to research a different wetland type and develop *Wetland Jeopardy Question & Answer* fact cards similar in format to those already provided below. Use the information provided in this chapter for reference material or consult one of the wetland texts listed in the *Appendix*.
2. After each team has developed a set number of cards, make copies of each *Question & Answer* for each student, including those provided below, to study for a game of *Wetlands Jeopardy* to be held the next day.

Wetlands Jeopardy

Question:	Answer:
<p>A. This area is made up of millions of small depressions left over from the Ice Ages. It extends across 300,000 square miles (780,000 km²) of plains in several states and provinces. It is one of the most important breeding spots for migratory waterfowl in the world.</p>	<p>(Prairie Potholes region)</p>
<p>B. In 1763, George Washington attempted to drain this wetland, which borders two states. Some of its ancient, bald cypress trees were probably here when European explorers first came to North America.</p>	<p>(Dismal Swamp)</p>
<p>C. The wetlands along the Charles River were filled in during the 1800's and the community known as Back Bay was built. Today Back Bay is part of this major New England city.</p>	<p>(Boston)</p>
<p>D. Part of this famous southern wetland is a national park. It is nicknamed the "river of grass" for the miles and miles of sawgrass that cover it. At the western border of this grassy wetland is a freshwater swamp. And along the southern coastal border, the sawgrass marsh gives way to a mangrove swamp.</p>	<p>(Everglades)</p>
<p>E. These tundra wetlands lie on the Arctic Circle. They are associated with a major river of the same name in the 49th state.</p>	<p>(Yukon Flats)</p>

Question:	Answer:
<p>F. This midwestern state is called the “Land of 10,000 Lakes.” The basins of these lakes were gouged out by glaciers during the last Ice Age. Because of the cool northern climate, many of these lakes have gradually filled in with sphagnum mosses, forming these special types of wetlands.</p>	(Minnesota)
<p>G. Parts of this southern wetland contain floating islands of peat which have broken away from underwater peat deposits. The Seminole Indians called this wetland the “Land of the Trembling Earth” because these islands often shake under the weight of people walking on them.</p>	(Okefenokee)
<p>H. This central plains state is the location of the Sand Hills, the Rainwater Basin, and the Platte River floodplain. These important wetland areas provide crucial nesting, breeding, and resting sites for migrating birds such as sandhill cranes and whooping cranes.</p>	(Nebraska)
<p>I. This wetland is in the bayou country of the lower Mississippi. The Cajun people who settled in and around this wetland are famous for their spicy seafood cooking. It is the third largest wetland of its kind in the U.S.</p>	(Atchafalaya)
<p>J. One of the most popular coastal cities in the U.S. was built along wetlands that line this western body of water. Today, over 80% of the original wetlands in the region have been destroyed. But the area still provides important habitat for wildlife.</p>	(San Francisco Bay)
<p>K. This globally rare evergreen wetland type is found in a narrow band along the eastern coastal U.S. ranging from Maine to Mississippi.</p>	(Atlantic White Cedar Swamps)
<p>L. One of the most popular national seashore parks in the East, this Massachusetts coastal treasure includes acres and acres of wetlands.</p>	(Cape Cod National Seashore)

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Activity 2: Research Wetland Habitats

Objective Students will develop an understanding of the variety of wetland types found in New England and around the globe by studying their geographical location, physical features and characteristic flora and fauna.

Materials Reference texts *

Wetland Celebrities

Students investigate one or more of the better-known wetlands in the U.S. or other parts of the world.

Wetland Plants & Animals

Students research the plants and animals unique to certain wetland types and report to the class on their findings. Which wetlands have endangered species? What are they? Why are they endangered and what is their status?

Students can present their findings in written or oral reports or by creating mobiles, posters or jigsaw puzzles of their chosen wetland.

Students can also keep a daily journal from the point of view of a wetland creature that is endangered. What is your day-to-day experience living in a wetland? What are your surroundings like? What kind of food do you eat? What kinds of obstacles do you face in staying alive each day – predators, human impacts, weather conditions, etc.?

* A free poster featuring information on wetland wildlife is available through the EPA Region I, Wetland Protection Section, JFK Federal Building, Boston, MA 02203.

Wetlands of Your Family's Country of Origin

Students research the presence and history of wetland types found in their country of origin. Some of the larger wetland systems found in other countries include:

Australia:	<i>Shark Bay, Kakadu National Park, Coongie Lakes</i>
China:	<i>Poyang Lake, Dongting Lake</i>
Denmark:	<i>Tollund Bog</i>
Finland:	<i>Fens</i>
Hong Kong:	<i>Mai Po Marshes</i>
India:	<i>Vale of Kashmir, Keoladeo Ghana National Park</i>
Iraq:	<i>Tigris-Euphrates</i>
Japan:	<i>Kushiro Marsh</i>
Netherlands:	<i>Wadden Sea</i>
New Guinea:	<i>Sepik & Ramu Floodplains</i>

New Zealand:	<i>Farewell Spit, Whangamarino</i>
South America:	<i>Pantanal</i>
Sudan:	<i>Sudd</i>
Russia:	<i>Lake Baykal</i>
Venezuela:	<i>Orinoco Delta</i>
Vietnam:	<i>Mekong Delta</i>

The Wetland Alphabet

Have the whole class work on a *wetland picture dictionary*. Ask the students to brainstorm words that begin with each letter of the alphabet and in some way relate to wetlands (e.g., **A**mphibian, **B**ullfrog, **C**attails). Students can illustrate and provide definitions for each term in a compiled scrapbook.

Other Suggested Activities

Have students create a dichotomous key to different wetland habitats. See *Living In Water: Aquatic Science Curriculum for Grades 4-6*, National Aquarium in Baltimore, 1987, pp. 21-29.

References *

A Directory of Asian Wetlands, Derek A. Scott. IUCN, The World Conservation Union, Gland, Switzerland. 1989. 1,181 pp.

Wetlands, Max Finlayson and Michael Moser, editors. Facts on File, Inc. New York, NY 1991. 224 pp.

Wetlands: A Threatened Landscape, Michael Williams. Basil Blackwell, Ltd., Cambridge, MA. 1990. 419 pp.

Wetlands in Danger, Patrick Dugan, editor. Mitchell Beazley, London. 1993. 193 pp.



