



Lots of Diversity

The purpose of this activity is for the students to suggest and record the vast variety of living things that can be found in freshwater. Their lists do not need to be exhaustive or all inclusive, nor are correct names necessary. The main point is that many different kinds of plants and animals live in freshwater habitats. In the next activity, the students will examine some of the interactions that take place among these living things.

There are a variety of ways that this activity could be approached. Students could work individually or in small groups. Alternatively, you could have a brainstorming session with the entire class. The existing knowledge of the students will vary. Some

will have little or no previous experience with freshwater habitats. For others, this will be very familiar. Encourage them to think about television programs they have seen as well. A classroom thematic display or a video could be used as a motivator.

At this time, the term “diversity” could be introduced in the context of their compiled list. Diversity refers to the variety of living things found in the habitat. Use local examples when possible; some examples are given below. This activity could be used in conjunction with a unit on classification of living things.

Fish	Birds	Mammals	Insects	Plants	Microscopic Organisms
eggs, alevin parr, smolt trout, sucker perch, pike salmon, eel stickleback char, bass	kingfisher merganser gull, loon cormorant heron, bittern ducks, osprey	mink otter humans muskrat beaver	eggs caddisfly larva fly larva beetles, ants grasshopper caterpillar mayfly larva water strider	algae water lily grasses pondweed trees Amphibians frog, salamander	eggs algae bacteria larvae plankton

Who Eats Whom?

In this diagram, the direction of the arrows indicates the direction of the flow of food energy. One example of a freshwater **food chain** would be: microscopic plants → microscopic animals → mayfly → trout → humans. In any habitat, individual food chains interconnect to form a complex **food web**.

