

Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA)
Natural Resources

Answer Key

The Atchafalaya National Heritage Area is a bountiful land with many natural resources. The Basin provides habitat for a diverse array of wildlife, including the American bald eagle and Louisiana black bear. The area is home to more than 85 species of fish, crawfish, and other crustaceans; many migratory waterfowl; forest-dwelling mammals (such as deer, squirrel, and beaver); and other commercially important furbearers. Well over 270 species of birds—some of them endangered—have been recorded in the Basin and its surrounding natural areas. Native Americans, early settlers, railroaders, road builders, loggers, and oil and gas explorers have all utilized the richness the region. Cypress and other hardwood forests provided building material and fuel for fireplaces. Water resources provided transport. The fertile soils made good cropland. A bounty for all!

Download the second booklet about the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area at <http://www.atchafalaya.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Curr2NatRes.pdf>. Use the Natural Resources booklet to complete the scavenger hunt below.

The Bounty of the Atchafalaya Basin

Fill in the blanks. (Pgs 6-11, 37, 39)

The Atchafalaya Basin is home to more than 85 species of fish, crawfish, and other crustaceans. Pg 6

The Atchafalaya River is the only remaining distributary above the mouth of the Mississippi River. A distributary is a waterway which removes water from a river. Pg 6

The primary purpose of the Atchafalaya Basin is navigation and flood control. Pg 8

The loss of wetlands in floodplains means the loss of buffers from hurricanes and storm surges. Pg 9

The Old River Control Structure is the only dam currently on the Atchafalaya River. Pg 9

Louisiana contains 40 percent of the nation's coastal wetlands and marshes. Pg 9

The wetlands provide an important natural buffer for flood control from heavy rains and hurricanes, as they retain and slow rapidly moving floodwaters. Pg 9

Every year 25-35 square miles of wetlands are lost in the US with Louisiana bearing 60-80 percent of the overall loss. Pg 9

The Mississippi River runs parallel to the Atchafalaya River. Pg 9

The Atchafalaya River contains the largest remaining bottomland and river swamp in America, and is the largest remaining segment of what was once a 24 million acre forest that covered portions of seven states. Pg 11

An **ecosystem** is an area where an organism finds the food, water, shelter, and space it needs to survive. Pg 37

The interrelationship between organisms classified as producers, consumers and decomposers forms a **food web**. Pg 37

The process of using the sun's energy to convert minerals in the soil to green leaves, carrots or strawberries is called **photosynthesis**. Pg 39

Statement	TRUE	FALSE
The American alligator is designated as the Louisiana state reptile. It was once endangered and is currently listed as "threatened due to similarity of appearance." Pg 13	x	
Invasive species do not effect wildlife populations because they don't compete for vegetation important to foraging and habitat. Pg 14		x
The 14 parishes of the ANHA are home to 24 federal and state listed threatened or endangered species, or species of concern, and three state listed special status species. Pg 14	x	
The three endangered mammals in the Atchafalaya Basin area are Finback whale, West Indian manatee, and bottlenose dolphin. Pg 15		x
Bald eagles live in the Atchafalaya Basin. Pg 16	x	

Can you find the:

Three major types of vegetation in the Atchafalaya Basin Region? Pg 12

1. **Bottomland hardwood**
2. **Bald cypress-water tupelo swamps**
3. **Coastal marshes**

Five birds that are threatened, endangered, or species of concern? Pgs 16, 17

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. **Various answers are possible.**

Five fish, reptiles, amphibians, and/or invertebrates on the threatened, endangered or species of concern lists? Pgs 18, 19, 20

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. **Various answers are possible.**

Three threats to the natural resources found in the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area? Pg 20

1. **Climate change**
2. **Development**
3. **Urbanization**

Important Science Concepts Q&A (Pgs 41, 49)
How does a food web differ from a food chain? Pg 41 A food chain is the path of food consumption. A food web is the interconnections created by food consumption.
Why are heterotrophs called consumers? Pg 41 They cannot make their own food and must consume, or eat, other organisms to survive.
What role do wetlands play in the water cycle? Pg 49 Wetlands store water from rain and floods, releasing it back into the air and environment.

Project

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