

Florida's Springs Habitat

Complete the Springs Habitat Fun Facts below by using the words provided to fill in the blanks.

American Alligator
Bald Cypress trees

Eel grass
Florida Gar

Golden Shiners
Great Blue Heron

Loggerhead Musk Turtle
River Otter

FISH

The _____ is a fish that looks like it came from the age of dinosaurs! They are shy creatures that spend their time in the shadows of plants located on the outer edge of the spring.

_____ get their name from the mirror-like scales, which reflect the sun's rays as it filters through the clear spring water. They are small fish that live in large groups and prefer quiet waters.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

The _____ can be seen basking in the sun along spring-fed river banks. They are the largest reptile in North America and can reach a length of up to 12 feet! That's the same length as 40 crayons lined up from top to bottom!

The _____ is almost never found outside of Florida's springs. They "breathe" by absorbing oxygen through their skin! These small creatures can grow to a maximum length of only five inches. That's even shorter than the length of a dollar bill!

BIRDS AND MAMMALS

The _____ is one of the most common birds you will see near a spring. These birds are about 4 feet tall (are you taller or shorter?) and are often seen hunting for fish, frogs and snakes.

Have you ever seen a _____ slip into the water alongside a spring-fed river? They are often hard to spot but commonly make their den in a bank or log near a Florida spring. They love to chow down on small fish and crustaceans (freshwater shrimp, spring crayfish).

PLANTS

_____, found in rivers that flow from Florida springs, is an underwater plant with ribbon-like leaves. Damselflies, snails and fish love spending time in and around it.

_____ are huge, majestic trees that can grow up to 150 feet tall with trunks measuring 12 feet across. Their knobby roots can be seen coming up out of shallow water and are called "knees." They have a long life-span and can live for over 1,000 years.



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