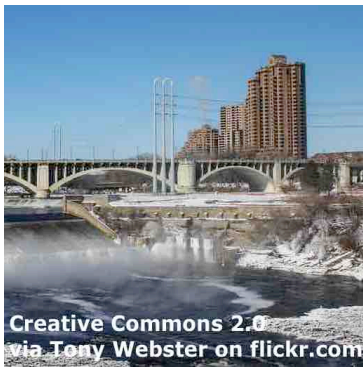


Most of world's rivers damaged by humans

21st February, 2021



A new study shows that 86 per cent of the world's rivers have been damaged by human activity. The study was conducted by researchers from a university in Toulouse, France. They examined data on over 2,500 rivers around the world. They did not

look at rivers in the polar regions of the Arctic and Antarctica or in deserts. The scientists looked into changes to biodiversity over the past 200 years. They discovered that biodiversity in over half of rivers has been seriously damaged by humans. The researchers said there were many reasons for this damage. A big reason is the introduction of new species of fish into rivers. Other reasons include pollution, dams, overfishing, farming and climate change.

The researchers say the worst-hit rivers are in western Europe and North America. This is because these regions have large and rich towns and cities. The lead researcher said: "Rivers which have the most economic development around them, like the Mississippi River, are the most strongly impacted." The River Thames in London was one of the worst-affected rivers in the study. The least-impacted rivers are in Africa and Australia. The researcher said: "This is probably due to a slower rate of industrialisation in Africa and low population density around rivers in Australia." He added that rivers in many rich nations are unrecognisable compared with how they were 200 years ago.

Sources: theguardian.com / newscientist.com / bloomberg.com

Writing

Everybody should spend time cleaning up rivers. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / rivers / human activity / data / polar regions / deserts / biodiversity / climate / regions / towns / cities / development / industrialisation / population / 200 years ago

True / False

- a) Humans have damaged over 85% of the world's rivers. T / F
- b) Researchers looked at data on more than 2,500 rivers. T / F
- c) Scientists looked at biodiversity loss over the past 2,000 years. T / F
- d) Farming is one reason for the damage done to rivers. T / F
- e) The worst-hit rivers are those in South America. T / F
- f) The River Thames in London is now very clean. T / F
- g) The rivers with the least damage are in Africa and Australia. T / F
- h) Rivers today look very different to how they looked 200 years ago. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. damaged | a. wealthy |
| 2. conducted | b. found |
| 3. regions | c. unidentifiable |
| 4. discovered | d. areas |
| 5. reason | e. affected |
| 6. rich | f. harmed |
| 7. impacted | g. cause |
| 8. due to | h. speed |
| 9. rate | i. carried out |
| 10. unrecognisable | j. because of |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of rivers?
- b) What is your favourite river?
- c) What childhood memories do you have of rivers?
- d) How do humans damage rivers?
- e) What do you think of your country's rivers?
- f) What rivers around the world would you like to see?
- g) What do you know about biodiversity loss?
- h) How do you feel when you see polluted rivers?

Phrase Match

- 86 per cent of the world's rivers
- They examined data on
- the polar regions of
- The scientists looked into changes
- the introduction of new species
- the worst-hit rivers are
- these regions have large
- economic
- due to a slower rate
- compared with how they were
- development
- the Arctic
- and rich towns
- of fish
- 200 years ago
- have been damaged
- to biodiversity
- of industrialisation
- over 2,500 rivers
- in western Europe

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of rivers in cities?
- What responsibility do city people have for their rivers?
- What should polluting companies do to clean up rivers?
- What activities do you like doing in rivers?
- What damage is done when a river dies?
- How might rivers have looked 200 years ago?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- The study was dtcneocdu by researchers
- in the polar segiorn
- the Arctic and Antarctica or in steerds
- osbvdtiieyri in over half of rivers
- Other reasons include uonlpliot
- letmica change
- eetnswr Europe
- the most niecmoco development
- one of the worst-eadtcffe rivers
- The least-mitadpec rivers
- low onopuptlia density
- paercomd with how they were

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. d	4. b	5. g
6. a	7. e	8. j	9. h	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Space

You think space is the thing we most need to protect from human activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which of these is the least in need of protection (and why): Antarctica, oceans or rainforests.

Role B – Antarctica

You think Antarctica is the thing we most need to protect from human activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which of these is the least in need of protection (and why): space, oceans or rainforests.

Role C – Oceans

You think oceans are the things we most need to protect from human activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which of these is the least in need of protection (and why): Antarctica, space or rainforests.

Role D – Rainforests

You think rainforests are the things we most need to protect from human activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which of these is the least in need of protection (and why): Antarctica, oceans or space.

Speaking – Human Activity

Rank these with your partner. Put the things we should protect from human activity at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Deserts
- Mount Everest
- Oceans
- Rainforests
- Space
- Antarctica
- Amazon River
- Ancient sites

Answers – True False

a T	b T	c F	d T	e F	f F	g T	h T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.