

What is a riparian zone?

Activity created by Landcare Education - ph 92964727

VELS links: Domains and Levels: Science (3, 4)

The riparian zone is the zone directly adjoining a waterway. It general includes an area up to 30 metres from the water channel. It also includes plants that grow in the water.

Can you estimate how far 30 metres is?

Take the tape measure and find out how far 30 metres is

Stream-side vegetation, if it remains intact, makes a good natural buffer against erosion, by reducing the transportation of sediment into streams and wetlands.

What does the term erosion mean?

When the stream-side vegetation is degraded it provides less protection against landuse impacts, and results in the deterioration of water quality, affecting aquatic plants and animals.



What is a catchment?

What are some things we do in our catchments that could negatively effect wetlands?

The riparian zone is a valuable source of food, shelter and breeding habitat for aquatic and terrestrial animals. Evergreen plants that overhang waterways drop leaves and branches, providing food for fish species and other aquatic animals, this material also provides shelter and habitat for animals such as birds and platypus.

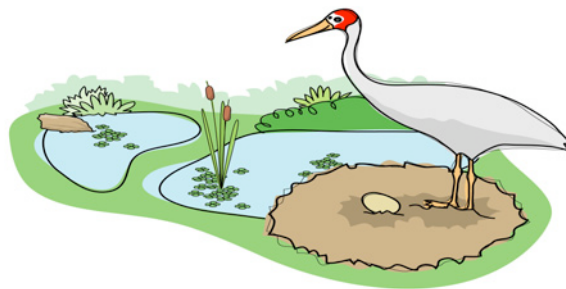
Can you name some evergreen plants? Eucalyptus species, Tea-tree species, Wattles

What is a deciduous tree?

Deciduous trees are those trees that lose their leaves in the autumn period and sprout new growth in spring.

Can you name some deciduous plants? English Oak, Elms

Name some animals that live in or around wetlands



In Brief - The benefits of having a healthy riparian zone are:

- Evergreen vegetation provides year round shelter and food. Many animals benefit from overhanging vegetation including birds and fish
- A healthy riparian zone has the potential to stabilises stream banks and limit the effect of catchment run off into streams by impeding water flow and trapping sediments and nutrients