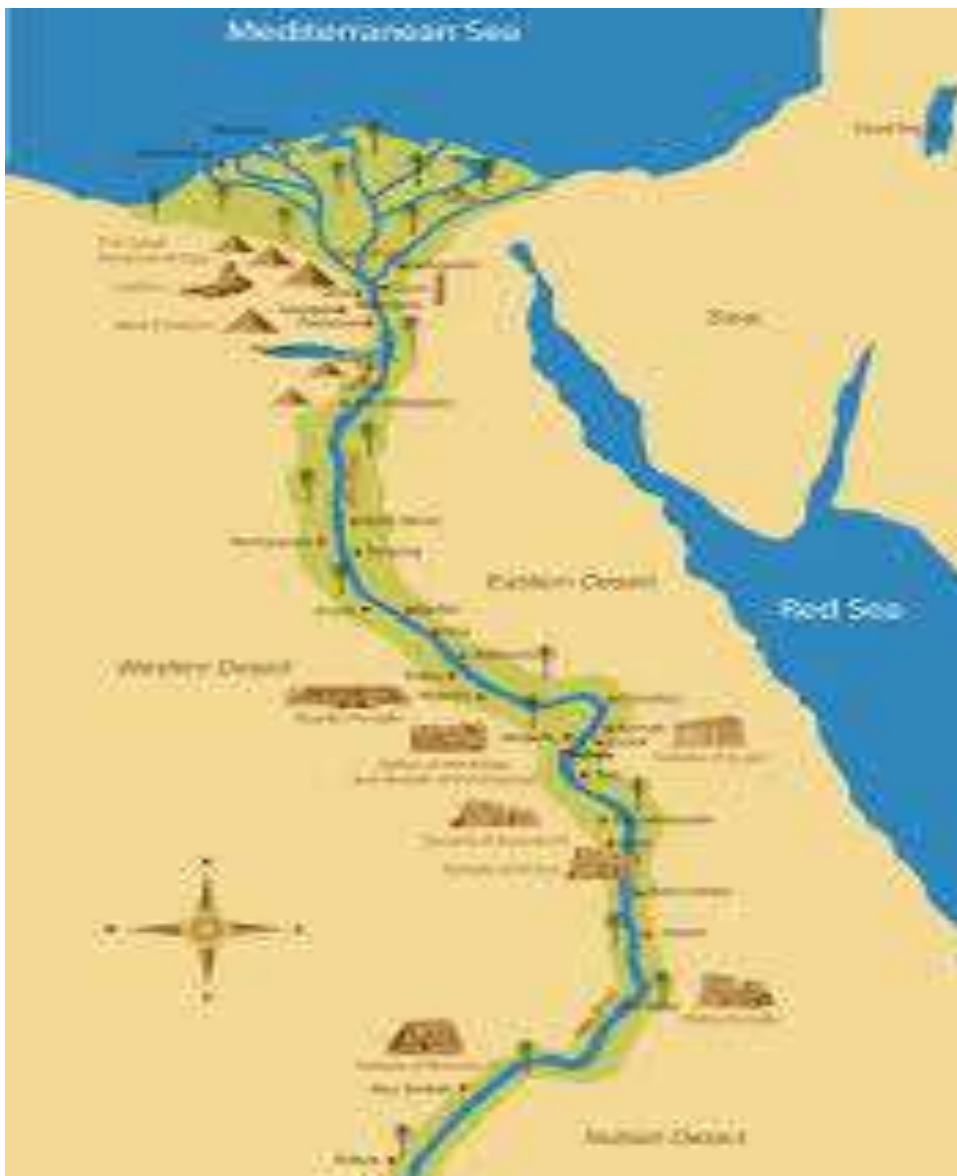


ENVIROKIDS WORKSHOPS



THE RIVER NILE



The Nile River- is the longest river in the world and is located in Africa. This mighty river is made up of 2 tributaries which form to make up the Nile, The White Nile which starts in South Sudan and The Blue Nile which starts in Ethiopia. The river flows north and merge in Khartoum and then makes its way through Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. There is difference in opinion as to whether the Amazon or the Nile is the longest river in the world. Scientists tend to go by the longest continuous channel in a system, but that may still leave room for debate. The Nile is only slightly longer than the Amazon River, for example in 2007 a team of Brazilian scientists announced they had remeasured the Amazon and found it to be 6,800 km (4,225 miles) long, thus dethroning the Nile, but this fact was never officially proven. The Nile is still generally credited as the world's longest river, by sources from the United Nations to the Guinness Book of World Records. Although the Amazon also boasts plenty of superlatives, including the world's largest river by volume, since it holds about 20% of Earth's freshwater. The Nile is 6,695Km in length and flows through 11 countries. **Tanzania Uganda the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Egypt.** In this issue we will take a look at this fabulous river in more detail, the animals it's home to and the people that rely on the river to survive, it's history and its future.



Murchison Falls



The White Nile



Lake Victoria

The White Nile

The White Nile is one of two rivers making up the Nile. It's called the White Nile because of the sediment it carries that's a grey color, found on the riverbed. The White Nile is longer than the Blue Nile and is 3,700km in length. The White Nile gets its source from Lake Victoria, which is named after Queen Victoria. Lake Victoria is the largest tropical lake in the world at a size nearly as big as Ireland. It's the second largest freshwater lake in the world after Lake Superior in North America. The lake is part of 3 countries **Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania** and is Africa's largest lake. The lake is home to over 200 species of fish and some large crocodiles. During flood season (June to September) a lot of the areas around the river are turned into lakes.

The Blue Nile

The Blue Nile is the second river that forms the Nile. The river starts in a lovely bright blue (hence the name) but as the river makes its way to Sudan, sediment in the river bed changes the color to a darker blue. The Blue Nile, even though it is smaller than the White Nile, transports two thirds of the water that flows in the Nile river. The Blue Nile forms in Lake Tana, the largest lake in Ethiopia. The lake has many islands, and these are home to some churches and monasteries and ancient Ethiopian Emperors relics. The Blue Nile then makes its way to Khartoum where it merges with the White Nile.



The Sahara

After stubbornly pushing north, the Blue and White meet in Khartoum and for the next 3000km to the Mediterranean Sea to form the Nile. The Nile then takes a surprising turn through the Sahara Desert. This contrast is visible from space, where a long, green oasis can be seen hugging the river amid the bleakly tanned landscape around it. The Sahara is the largest hot desert on Earth, smaller only than our two polar deserts The Arctic and Antarctic. The Sahara is 134 times the size of Ireland and this region used to be lush with lots of plants and animals. Temperatures in the Sahara can be up to 50 Degrees and over 2 million people call the Sahara home. Some of the sand dunes are up to 500ft high but the highest point is a volcano, Emi Koussi in Chad at 11,302 ft. The river then continues north through Sudan for a while, then abruptly turns southwest and starts flowing away from the sea. It goes on like this for about 300 km (186 miles), as if it's heading back to Central Africa instead of Egypt. It eventually gets back on track, of course, and crosses Egypt as one of the most famous and influential rivers on Earth. But why does it take such a big detour first? Known as the "**Great Bend**," see picture below, this is one of several features caused by a huge underground rock formation called the Nubian Swell. The river then comes to one of the most famous regions on the planet.



The Ancient Egyptian pyramids are some of the most impressive structures built by man in ancient times. Many of the pyramids are still standing today for all to see and explore. The pyramids were built as burial places and monuments to the Pharaohs. As part of their religion, the Egyptians believed that the Pharaoh needed these. Deep inside the pyramid the Pharaoh would be buried with all sorts of items and treasure from their lives. Some of the earlier pyramids, called step pyramids, have large ledges every so often that look like giant steps. Archaeologists think that the steps were built as stairways for the pharaoh to use to climb to the sun god. Later pyramids have more sloping and flat sides. These pyramids represent a mound that emerged at the beginning of time.

There are around 138 Egyptian pyramids. Some of them are huge. The largest is the Pyramid of Khufu, also called the Great Pyramid of Giza. When it was first built it was over 480 feet tall! It was the tallest man-made structure for over 3800 years and is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It's estimated that this pyramid was made from 2.3 million blocks of rock weighing 5.9 million tonnes, the blocks were carried nearly 40 miles away and some were sourced near the site itself. The river leaves Giza and starts on its final journey to the Mediterranean, but it has one last place to visit and that's Cairo. Cairo is the capital city of Egypt and has a population of around 8 million people. In 1992 the city was hit with an Earthquake that caused a lot of damage to the city. The city relies on the Nile for so much and without this great river things would be a lot different.



The Wildlife

Humans are just one of the many species who rely on the Nile, which flows through and helps a variety of ecosystems along its course. Closer to the White Niles headwaters, the river's biodiverse and tropical rainforests are teeming with plants like banana trees, bamboo, coffee shrubs, to name a few. It reaches mixed woodland and savanna farther north and then becomes a sprawling swamp in the Sudanese plains during the rainy season, especially the legendary Sudd (Huge Swamp) in South Sudan, which spans nearly 260,000 square kms, 3 times the size of Ireland. Vegetation continues to fade as it moves north, finally all but vanishing as the river arrives in the desert. The Nile also supports several large animal species, such as **Hippopotamuses and the Rhino** which were once common along much of the river, but now mostly inhabit the Sudd and other swampy areas in South Sudan. Perhaps the river's most famous is the Nile crocodile, they live in most parts of the river and are one of the largest crocodylian species on Earth, growing up to 6 meters (20 feet) long. The river is home to 3 species of Monitor lizard who love to eat crocodile eggs which can be extremely dangerous for them if they are caught, they could grow up to 7ft long. There are 30 species of snakes and 17 of these are venomous. The Black Mamba which are amazingly fast and highly venomous, they are brown in colour but get their name from their black mouth and can grow up to 14ft. The Cape Cobra is highly venomous like the Black Mamba but not as big, up to 6ft in length and also the Carpet Viper are some of the snakes to be found along the Nile. The softshell Turtle, the Nile River Dolphin and over 100 species of fish like the Nile perch growing up to 6ft and 220kg and the Marbled Lungfish who, unlike other fish, has lungs and can survive for months by burrowing themselves in the ground. Also, land animals like the Buffalo and Elephant can be seen along the river, such animals as Lions and Giraffes used to be seen, but got pushed out of the region to less populated areas. The Nile River is one of the great rivers of the world. I hope you enjoyed this look at the great river, see some fun facts below.

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7 Fun Facts

1. The Nile River is an important part of Egyptian spiritual life. The Egyptians believed that it was the passageway between life and death. All tombs are built on the west side of the Nile because the west was considered the place of death since the sun god Ra set in the west each day.
2. The Nile River flooded annually, keeping soil along the river fertile and ideal for farming. This made Egyptian agriculture one of the most productive in the Near East.
3. The Ancient Egyptians planned their calendar around the Nile and the stars. The year began in mid-July when the river began to rise for the annual flood.
4. The god most strongly associated with the Nile was Osiris, who was killed by his brother Seth on the riverbank and then became the king of the Underworld.
5. A popular river sport played by Ancient Egyptians was water jousting, in which two-man teams in canoes would try to knock each other out of the boat.
6. Reeds, called papyrus, grow along the river. Ancient Egyptians use papyrus to create paper and boats.
7. Cats were considered sacred by the Egyptians; it is believed that most homes kept a cat for good luck.

Activities to do at home

Do some research on the pharaohs and discover why they built the pyramids.

Do a small project on how the Nile is so important to so many people and creatures, and draw the important areas it passes through.



Quiz

- 1, How long is the Nile River?
- 2, How many times would Ireland fit into the Sahara?
- 3, Where do the two rivers meet?
- 4, What sport was played by ancient Egyptians?
- 5, How many species of snakes can be found along the Nile?
- 6, What is the huge swamp that comes in the rainy season in Sudan called?
- 7, What is the name of the Lizard that can grow to 7ft long that's found along the Nile?
- 8, Name the 2 rivers that form the Nile?
- 9, What is the name of the huge lake that's named after an English monarch?
- 10, How many countries dose the Nile flow through?

All answers will be in our next issue (Our Canal systems)

Quiz answers from last issue Carbon footprint.

- 1, What are the best bulbs to save energy? LED Bulbs**
- 2, What are the 4 Rs? Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle**
- 3, How much do money do we each waste on food each year €? €700 worth**
- 4, What should we do with all devices at night? Turn off all devices**
- 5, Name some veg you can grow in winter? Cabbage, Sprouts, Turnips**
- 6, 3 ways to get to school and save the environment? Cut down on food waste, reduce electricity, recycle**
- 7, Who do you support by shopping local? It reduces carbon footprint and helps the environment.**
- 8, What's a good tip when boiling a kettle? Boil only what you need.**
- 9, What is a Carbon Calculator used for? To calculate you carbon use.**
- 10, Is red meat good for the environment? No, carbon footprint from red meat is extremely high.**



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