

UNIT 5: Virginia's Resources



READ and REMEMBER: Animals, Plants, Forests, & Soil

SOL 4.8.b, 4.8.d

Virginia has a wealth of natural resources. Its soil and land support a wide variety of **wildlife** (including **flora**, or plants, and **fauna**, or animals). Here are a few examples:

Land animals	Aquatic animals	Birds	Plants
white-tail deer, red fox, copperhead snake, bobcat, black bear, eastern cougar (puma), racoon, timber rattlesnake, and a variety of rodents (including mice, squirrels, rats, rabbits, and bats)	blue crab, river otter, several types of bass, muskrat, several types of trout, horseshoe crab (saltwater only, such as along the shore and in parts of Chesapeake Bay), American eel, bluegill, several types of catfish, turtle, beaver	bald eagle, cardinal (<i>Virginia state bird</i>), osprey, mallard, Eastern screech-owl and Great Horned owl, several types of woodpeckers and sparrows	Grass: sedge, bluestem, cordgrass Shrubs: holly, azaleas; Trees: dogwood (<i>Virginia state tree</i>), maple (including sugar maple), birch, oak, hickory, cypress, Atlantic white cedar, and pine (including Virginia pine)

Virginia has an abundance of plant and animal resources in large part because of its **climate**. Climate is what weather (especially temperature and rainfall) is usually like in a place. You can think about it this way: *climate* is what you expect, year-in and year-out; *weather* is what you experience on a specific day.

Virginia's temperatures are more moderate than most states, ranging from an average of around 25° F (-4° C) to 85° F (30° C). The state also gets ample rainfall, with most of the state averaging 50 – 60 inches (about 120 to 150 cm) per year.

Virginia also has rich soil, in part due to the many rivers in the state, which provide **sediment** rich in nutrients. In fact, *Virginia's state soil*, Pamunkey, is soil enriched by river sediment.

Virginia's **natural and cultivated forests** help support the ecosystem. (A *cultivated forest* is one maintained, and sometimes planted, by people.) Many plants and animals rely on the existence of these forests. The forests are also used as a natural resource. When carefully harvested, trees provide fuel and building material that helps Virginia's economy.