

# Our Precious River Water

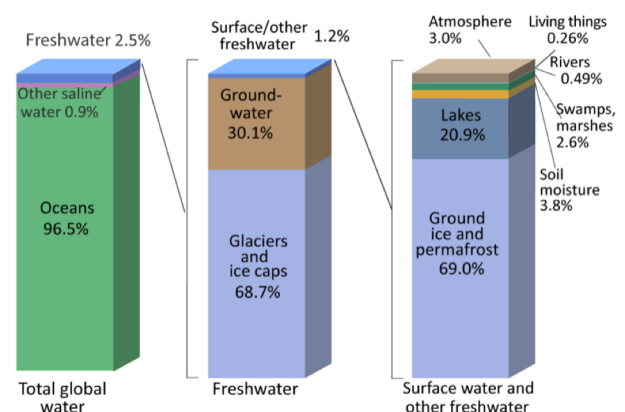


The Ohio River provides water to most of the residents in Southwest Indiana every day. Water from the Ohio River may look plentiful, however, river water is not actually abundant when considered in the context of distribution of Earth's water.

Earth's water is broadly categorized into **saltwater** and **freshwater**. Almost all of the Earth water is regarded as saltwater in the oceans that cannot be consumed by humans, and freshwater accounts for only 2.5%.

Most of the freshwater is stored in glaciers/icecaps or underground. The remainder—surface water (lakes, swamps, rivers, and snow on the top of the mountains)—is only 1.2% of the total freshwater ([USGS](#)). In fact, river water accounts for only 0.00015% of the total water on the earth!

Where is Earth's Water?



Source: [US Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#)

## DISRUPTED WATER CYCLE

The water balance of the Earth has long been kept through a stable **water cycle**. However, recent human activities have significantly altered this water cycle, disrupting the environment's natural balance.

Human activities such as the use of river water at power plants to generate electricity, water extraction from rivers for industrial use, destruction of forests for agriculture, removal of groundwater for irrigation, and exploitation of water to support urbanization are some of the contributors to the alteration of the water cycle. The disrupted water cycle has resulted in erosion, pollution, floods, and mudslides.

Furthermore, climate scientists suggest that climate change has also aggravated the alternation of the water cycle.

In addition to with more water moving through the cycle due to the melting Arctic and sea ice, climate change has caused more intense rains, floods, droughts, snow, and extreme heat and heat waves. Scientists predict that dry regions will become drier and wet regions will become wetter if current trends continue.

[The Water Cycle for Kids, USGS](#)

