

Welcome to Our Shared Waters

An Overview of the Delaware River Basin



Four States: The Delaware River Basin includes parts of DE, NJ, NY & PA.



Population Served: 14.2 Million people depend on the Delaware River Basin's water resources.



Length: The Delaware River is 330 miles long.



Area: The Delaware River Basin is 13,549 square-miles.



Tributaries: Over 2,000 waterways eventually drain to the Delaware River.

The Delaware River Basin

- A watershed is all the land that drains to a body of water. A basin is a large watershed made up of smaller ones.
- The Delaware River Basin begins in New York State at Hancock, N.Y., where the east & west branches come together. The river meets the Atlantic Ocean at Lewes, Del./Cape May, N.J.
- Indigenous Peoples have lived in the Delaware River Basin for over 12,000 years; the largest group is the Lenape. Others include the Nanticoke, Mohawk & Oneida.
- From Hancock to Trenton, N.J. the river is non-tidal; from Trenton south to the Atlantic Ocean, it is tidal.
- Roughly 60% of the Basin is natural landscapes (forest, water/wetland). 20% is developed; the rest is farmland.
- The Basin supports a robust water-based economy totaling over \$20 billion annually & 600,000+ jobs.

Fun Facts

- The Delaware River is the **longest, undammed river east of the Mississippi River.**
- It is an **interstate river**; when you stand on one bank, you look across at another state.
- Its **largest tributaries** are the Schuylkill and Lehigh rivers in Pennsylvania.
- It is home to the **largest freshwater port in the world:** the port of Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington.
- The Delaware Estuary - the tidal portion of the river and bay - is part of the **National Estuary Program.**
- Three-quarters of the non-tidal river north of Trenton, N.J. is part of the **National Wild & Scenic Rivers Program.** Several other waterways in the Basin also hold this distinction.
- The Delaware River's **cleanup** is considered one of the **world's top water quality success stories.**

Did You Know?



The Delaware River is a drinking water source for 14+ million people!



Delaware River Basin Commission
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The Delaware River Basin: Clean, Sustainable & Secure Water Resources for People & Wildlife



How is Water Used in the Delaware River Basin?

- Approximately 6.1 Billion Gallons of water is used everyday in the Basin, 92% of which is obtained from surface waters (2022 data).
- The 3 main water uses in the Basin are power generation, public water supply and industry.

Free Flowing but Managed

- There are no dams on the Delaware River, but its flows are managed to ensure there is enough water at all times for all needs.
- Reservoirs on tributaries are used for a variety of purposes: drinking water, water supply, flood mitigation &/or recreation.



Protecting & Improving Water Quality

- The entire non-tidal Delaware River is under the DRBC's Special Protection Waters Program, ensuring its existing high water quality is not degraded.
- The water quality improvements seen in the tidal Delaware River - the Delaware River Estuary - are remarkable, making waterfront communities places where people want to live, work and play.

Important Habitat for Wildlife

- The Delaware River Basin is home to a large variety of plants, wildlife and aquatic life, including more than 400 bird species and more than 100 species of fish.
- The high-quality waters of the upper Basin are known as a world-class trout fishery.
- Some Basin species are threatened or endangered, for example, the Atlantic sturgeon, a migratory fish.