

**The Nature Conservancy in Georgia**

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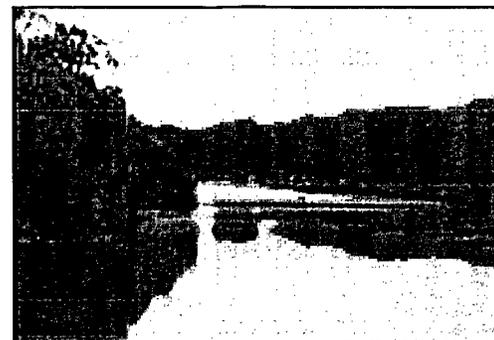
**The Altamaha River**

**Geography**

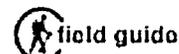
The slow moving waters of the Altamaha River flow effortlessly through some of the South's last remaining hardwood bottomlands, cypress swamps, historic rice fields and tidal marshes. Unhampered by dams, the Altamaha River winds 137 miles from the confluence of the Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers to its coastal terminus near the historic fishing town of Darien. Encompassing 1.2 million acres and spanning 10 rural south Georgia counties, the Altamaha River watershed is one of the three largest river basins on the Atlantic Seaboard, draining approximately one-quarter the state of Georgia. Expelling approximately 100,000 gallons of freshwater into the Atlantic Ocean every second, the Altamaha River is truly "Georgia's Mightiest River."

**Wildlife**

The Altamaha River watershed ranks among the most biologically rich river systems along the Atlantic seaboard. With a floodplain up to 5 miles wide at some points, the watershed sustains globally rare natural communities, including the only known example of old-growth longleaf pine-black oak forest in the county. The river supports 11 imperiled pearly mussel species, seven of which are found nowhere else in the world. At least 120 species of rare or endangered plants and animals are found in the Altamaha River watershed - the largest documented cluster of globally imperiled plants and animals of any watershed in Georgia.



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Learn more about this project with the [Online Field Guide](#).

The rich diversity of the Altamaha River basin includes:

**Animals**

- American Oystercatcher
- Atlantic and shortnose sturgeons
- Georgia spiny mussel
- Gopher tortoise
- Piping plover
- Red-cockaded woodpecker
- Swallow-tailed kite
- West Indian manatee
- Eastern indigo snake

#### Plants

- Alabama milkvine
- Longleaf pine
- Greenfly orchid
- Radford dicerandra
- Georgia plume
- False dragonhead
- Hairy rattleweed
- Tickseed
- Florida corkwood



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#### What The Nature Conservancy is Doing

Although The Nature Conservancy began to actively protect land in the Altamaha watershed in the late 1960s, the organization's focus on large landscape-scale protection efforts encouraged the formation of the Altamaha River Bioreserve project in 1991. At that time, The Nature Conservancy initiated an ecological survey of the lower Altamaha River watershed, which yielded a set of 18 landcover maps, significantly increasing resource managers' understanding of the biological condition of lands adjacent to the river. The landscape-scale landcover classification methodology developed at this project became a model for other Conservancy efforts around the country.



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In order to achieve its conservation goals in the Altamaha River watershed, The Nature Conservancy works with landowners, governments, communities and industry partners who share the common goal of protecting the Altamaha River and preserving traditional land and water uses that depend on a healthy river system. To date, The Nature Conservancy has played a role in protecting more than 79,000 acres of land in the lower Altamaha River watershed. Only through partnerships with the many government agencies, community groups, landowners (private, public and industrial) and other conservation organizations, can The Nature Conservancy achieve its goal to protect the Altamaha River system, one of the 75 Last Great Places.

To learn more about the Conservancy's on-going efforts to protect the Altamaha River basin, download the [Altamaha River fact sheet](#).

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