

The Cahaba River Watershed

The Cahaba River Watershed covers 1,870 square miles, all within Alabama's borders, and contains the longest free-flowing river in the state. The Cahaba River begins in north-central Alabama on Cahaba Mountain and flows to the southwest where it eventually joins with the Alabama River near Selma. It is also the primary source of drinking water for the Birmingham-metro area. The Cahaba River watershed provides habitat for 135 fish species, including many species unique to Alabama, such as the Cahaba Shiner, Crystal Darter, Freckled Darter, Goldline Darter, and Frecklebelly Madtom. It is also home to 36 species of mussels, 31 species of snails, and 17 species of crayfish. These high levels of biodiversity have resulted in the Cahaba River being recognized as a global biodiversity hotspot by the World Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy. For sport fishing, the Cahaba River watershed hosts habitat for multiple species of bass, catfish, and crappie. In addition, the Cahaba River watershed is extensively used for other types of water recreation, including fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.



- Protected Areas
- Cities
- Waterways



Iconic Species



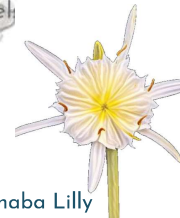
Cahaba Shiner



Oblong Rocksnail



Frecklebelly Madtom



Cahaba Lilly



Goldline Darter

Major Threats

Major threats to the Cahaba watershed include urban development, stormwater runoff, and nonpoint source pollution.

Primary Waterways and Reservoirs

- Shades Creek
- Little Cahaba River
- Buck Creek
- Lake Purdy

Fun Facts



The Great Seal of Alabama features the state's extensive river system and is the only state seal to feature rivers.

With 135 fish species known to occur in the Cahaba River watershed, the Cahaba River alone has more fish species than the entire state of California.

The largest known stand of the Cahaba Lilly is protected within the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge.

