

BIODIVERSITY IN OUR STREAMS

Durham waterways are home to many types of creatures including many that are a critical food source for other animals.



In order to provide clear methods of improving our streams as habitats for wildlife, the City studied previous data to find out exactly what was wrong.

The City monitors the streams and gives them a rating based on the numbers and type of aquatic animals found in them. This is called a biodiversity rating. If the rating is low, the stream is considered impaired. Usually, a low rating is blamed on poor water quality, but recent studies have shown that many things can affect a stream's creatures.

Research

They looked at two things:

- Habitat
- Available food sources

Studying these helped staff discover what should live in each stream. They then looked at what actually did live there. They compared the results from year to year and stream to stream to create unique profiles for each stream.

Results

The study showed that the main reason for the loss of biodiversity in our streams is habitat. Rocks and a consistent flow of water are important for a healthy stream.

Clean water is also important. Some types of creatures need a very specific habitat to survive. Those also tend to be the ones that are sensitive to water pollution. They are especially vulnerable in Durham's waterways.