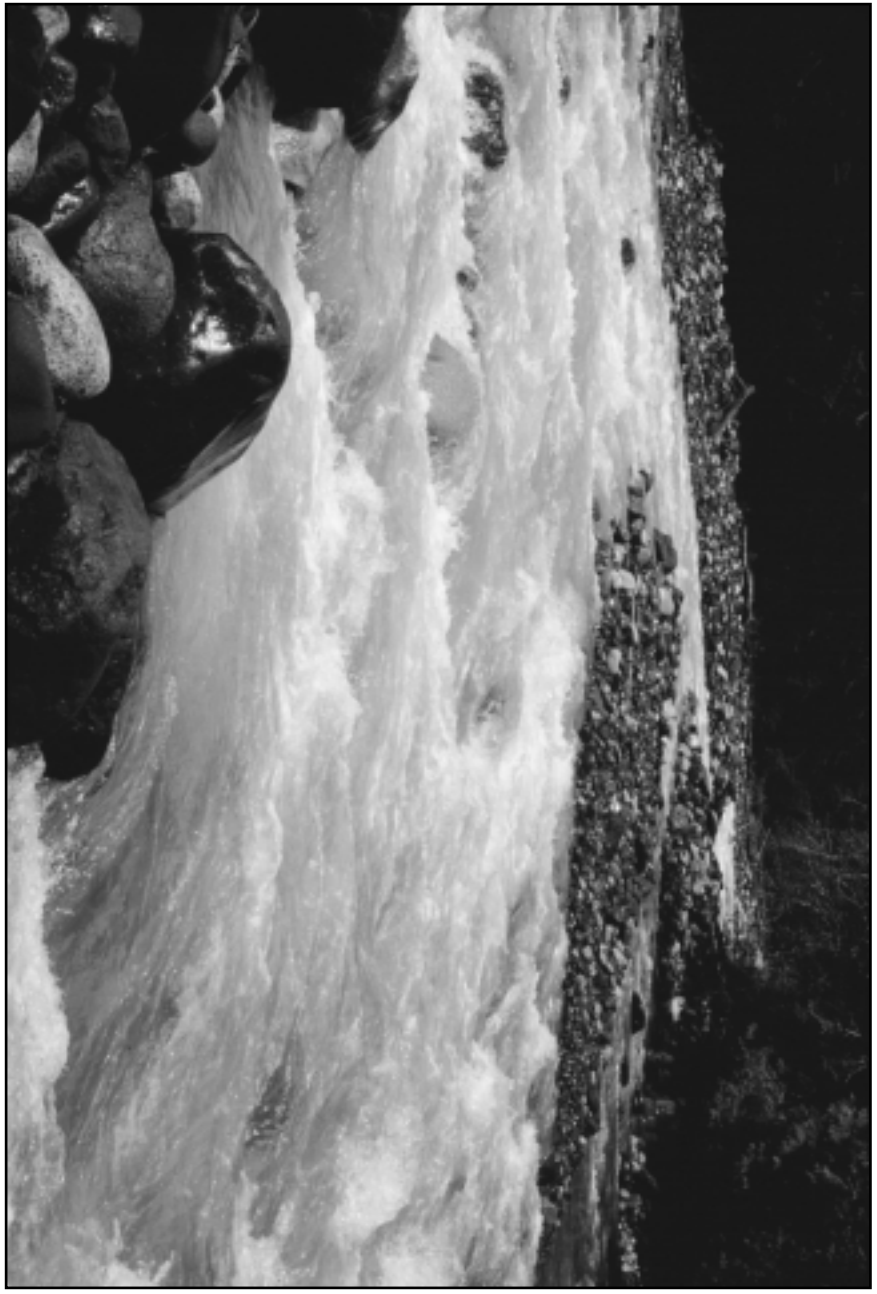
John H. McShane, Nisqually River, Mt. Ranier, WA



State and Territory Summaries

This section provides individual summaries of the water quality assessment data reported by the states and territories in their 1998 Section 305(b) reports. The summaries provide a general overview of water quality conditions and the most frequently identified water quality problems in each state and territory. However, the use support data contained in these summaries are not comparable because the states and territories do not use comparable criteria and monitoring strategies to measure their water quality. States and territories with strict criteria for defining healthy waters are more likely to report that a high percentage of their waters are in poor condition. Similarly, states with progressive monitoring programs are more likely to identify water quality problems and to report that a high percentage of their waters do not fully support designated uses. As a result, one cannot assume that water quality is worse in those states and territories that report a high percentage of impacted waters in the following summaries.

Section 305(b) of the CWA requires that the states biennially assess their water quality for attainment of the fishable and swimmable goals of the Act and report the results to EPA. The states, participating tribes, and other jurisdictions measure attainment of the CWA goals by determining how well their waters support their designated beneficial uses. EPA encourages states, tribes, and other jurisdictions to assess waterbodies for support of the following individual beneficial uses:

Aquatic Life Support

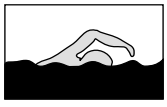
The waterbody provides suitable habitat for protection and propagation of desirable fish, shellfish, and other aquatic organisms.

Fish Consumption

The waterbody supports fish free from contamination that could pose a human health risk to consumers.

Shellfish Harvesting

The waterbody supports a population of shellfish free from toxicants and pathogens that could pose a human health risk to consumers.



Primary Contact Recreation – Swimming

People can swim in the waterbody without risk of adverse human health effects (such as catching waterborne diseases from raw sewage contamination).

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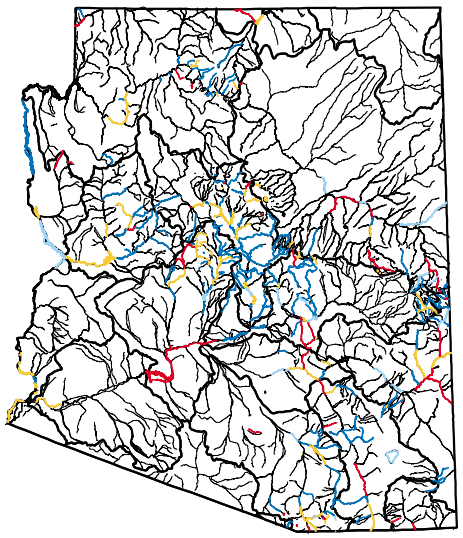
Color Maps in the State and Territory Summaries

This National Water Quality Inventory includes color maps displaying use support for 35 states that supplied their use support assessments to EPA in an electronic format, such as a database.

Depending on the type of data submitted, EPA generated three different types of color maps. Two of them illustrate the aquatic life use support attainment status of specific waterbodies. These could only be prepared for the 15 states that georeferenced* their assessment findings to specific waterbodies. The two types of maps reflect the level of precision reported. One type shows the attainment status of assessed waterbodies (Figure 1). The other type colors each assessed waterbody based on the percent of the waterbody that is fully supporting aquatic life use (Figure 2). In most cases, these two types of maps show all the assessment data for an entire state. In the few instances where a statewide map would be difficult to read, only the assessments from one or two basins are shown.

The third type of map presents assessment data that were georeferenced* to a watershed rather than to a specific waterbody (Figure 3). These maps color an entire watershed based on the percent of assessed waters that are fully supporting all uses. These maps present the most generalized view of water quality.



This map depicts aquatic life use support status.

Figure 1. Color map showing the aquatic life attainment status of each assessed waterbody.

*Georeferencing describes the process of locating a waterbody in coordinates that can be used in a geographic information system (GIS).

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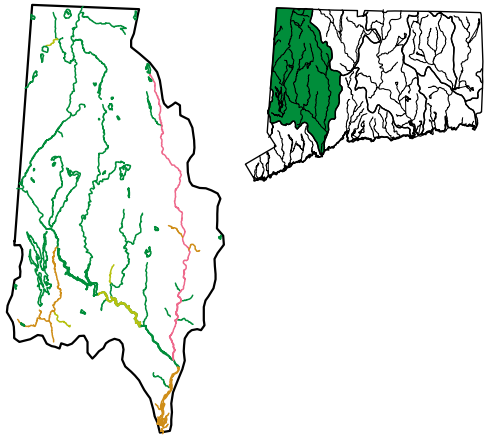
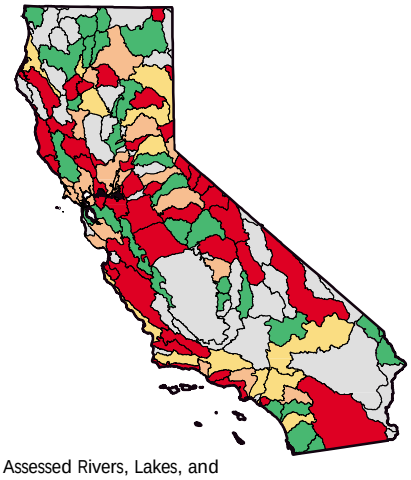


Segment 80% -100% Fully Supporting
Segment 50% - 79% Fully Supporting
Segment 20% - 49% Fully Supporting
Segment 0% - 19% Fully Supporting
Basin Boundaries
(USGS 6-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

This map depicts aquatic life use support status.

Figure 2. Color map showing the percent of each assessed waterbody fully supporting aquatic life use support.



Percent of Assessed Rivers, Lakes, and Estuaries Meeting All Designated Uses

80% - 100% Meeting All Uses
50% - 79% Meeting All Uses
20% - 49% Meeting All Uses
0% - 19% Meeting All Uses
Insufficient Assessment Coverage
Basin Boundaries
(USGS 8-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

Figure 3. Color map showing the percent of the assessed waterbodies in each watershed fully supporting all uses.