
This is not a word for word transcript.

- Chris:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English, the programme where we discuss a topical subject and introduce you to some of the interesting vocabulary connected to that topic. I'm Chris and with me today is Rosie.
- Rosie:** Hello.
- Chris:** Rosie, are concerned about the environment?
- Rosie:** Yes, I am! We need to be aware of it and make a real effort to preserve our natural resources.
- Chris:** So you'll be very interested in today's story. It's about a group of environmentalists in Croatia who want to preserve – to maintain in unaltered condition – one of the country's major rivers: The Danube.
- Rosie:** Oh, I know a lot about the Danube, Chris. It's the second longest river in Europe, flowing through several countries – and its floodplain forests are home to a great deal of wildlife. Floodplain is a vast flat area bordering a river and subject to flooding.
- Chris:** We are going to learn the details of this story shortly. But first, here comes our traditional quiz. Are you ready for it, Rosie?
- Rosie:** Yes, go for it!
- Chris:** You seem to be very familiar with the River Danube but how much do you know about other important rivers around the world? So tell me which one of these rivers is the longest? Is it:
- (a) The River Ganges, in India
 - (b) The River Yangtze, in China or
 - (c) The River Nile, in Egypt
- Rosie:** It's c) the River Nile, in Egypt!
- Chris:** That's a good guess. I'll let you know by the end of the programme.
- Rosie:** I'm very keen to know about what's happening to the Danube.

Chris: Rosie, there are plans to regulate the river flow, which could have an impact on the floodplains and their wildlife. Listen to a report from the BBC's Nick Thorpe. He explains what the Croatian agency for waterways is planning to do.

BBC correspondent Nick Thorpe:

The Kopacki Rit area, where the River Drava flows into the Danube, is one of the best preserved areas of floodplain forests in Europe. It's a major fish-spawning area, with ancient willow forests which flood each summer, and is home to large populations of rare white-tailed eagles and black storks. The Croatian Agency for Inland Waterways plans to regulate both the Drava and the Danube – reinforcing river banks with rocks and constructing groynes to concentrate the water flow.

Chris: So we heard in the report that the river is a major area for fish-spawning area – where they breed. And it's home to large populations of birds like eagles and storks. But what did the reporter say the agency is planning to do, Rosie.

Rosie: It's planning to reinforce – or strengthen – the river banks with rocks. It's also going to construct groynes to concentrate the water flow.

Chris: A groyne. The agency argues that by building this type of wall from a riverbank will help to improve shipping and give further protection against flooding.

Rosie: And how could this affect the animals that live on the floodplains, Chris?

Chris: Tibor Mikuska leads one of the environmental groups that are campaigning against the construction work. And he will explain why he thinks the proposed plans are a problem.

Environmental campaigner Tibor Mikuska:

Regulation projects try to fix the river to the concrete corridor, and that's causing, as a consequence, riverbed deepening, and as a consequence we have a drop in the water level, both river and ground water level, so the area adjacent to the river will dry up slowly but steadily.

Chris: We heard there that the water regulation projects will cause a drop in the water level, what will cause the area near the river to dry up.

Rosie: If there is no water at all on the floodplains, if it dries up, it could affect the ecosystem – that's a word which describes the animal and plant life that lives in a particular environment.

Chris: So the question is: What is Croatia doing to protect its wildlife? Let's listen to the final part of BBC's Nick Thorpe report to find out.

BBC correspondent Nick Thorpe:

Parallel to the scheme, Croatia, Hungary and three other countries in the region have already signed an agreement to create a biosphere reserve, linking already protected areas into a single unit. Croatia is due to join the European Union next year. EU experts are studying the regulation plans and are expected to announce their conclusions soon.

- Rosie:** Ah, they've signed an agreement with other countries in the region to create a biosphere reserve. This is a huge area in which the environment is protected. It is internationally recognized and chosen by the national government.
- Chris:** They are established with the help of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- Rosie:** So there is hope that the wildlife that lives on the Danube's floodplains.
- Chris:** Sure. And let's hope all the other major rivers in the world are cared for too. Especially the ones on our quiz, Rosie.
- Rosie:** So go on, give us the answer!
- Chris:** Which one of these rivers is the longest? Is it:
(a) The River Ganges, in India
(b) The River Yangtze, in China or
(c) The River Nile, in Egypt
- Rosie:** I said c) the River Nile, in Egypt. I'm pretty sure I'm right!
- Chris:** Well, you are correct indeed! It is The River Nile, in Egypt, with almost 6,700 km. So well done, you got it right! But we are running out of time so let's concentrate on some of the words we heard today – especially useful for people who follow the news and want to know about the environment. The words are...
- Rosie:** **to preserve**
a floodplain
a fish-spawning area
to reinforce
a groyne
to dry up
an ecosystem
a biosphere reserve
- Chris:** That's all we have time for today but do join us again for more 6 Minute English and for more help with any aspects of your English language studies go to our website BBCLearningEnglish.com. Bye for now!
- Rosie:** Bye!

Vocabulary and definitions

to preserve	to maintain in unaltered condition
a floodplain	a vast flat area bordering a river and subject to flooding
a fish-spawning area	area where fish breed
to reinforce	to strengthen
a groyne	a type of wall from a riverbank
to dry up	to become totally devoid of water or moisture
an ecosystem	a particular environment where certain animals and plant life survive
a biosphere reserve	This is a huge area in which the environment is protected. It is internationally recognized and chosen by the national government. They are established with the help of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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