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Ecoregion Download Files by State - Region 4

Select a state for descriptive information about that state's Level III and IV ecoregions. Additionally, each state section contains links to downloadable maps in PDF format, and files containing GIS datasets (shapefiles, metadata, and symbology data).

Some Web content for Level IV Ecoregions is under construction. If you do not find a link to a state that has been completed, maps and GIS data are available on the [Ecoregion FTP site](#) and web content will be available shortly.

NOTE: maps and GIS files may differ. To make sure you are using the most current ecoregion data, download shapefiles of ecoregions.

Related Links

- [Ecoregions Home](#)
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Alabama

GIS Data (shapefiles, metadata and symbology)

- [Alabama Level III Shapefile \(482 kb\)](#)
- [Alabama Level III Metadata](#) and [Alabama Level III Symbology](#)
- [Alabama Level IV Shapefile \(951 kb\)](#)
- [Alabama Level IV Metadata](#) and [Alabama Level IV Symbology](#)
- [Instructions for applying symbology to ecoregions](#)

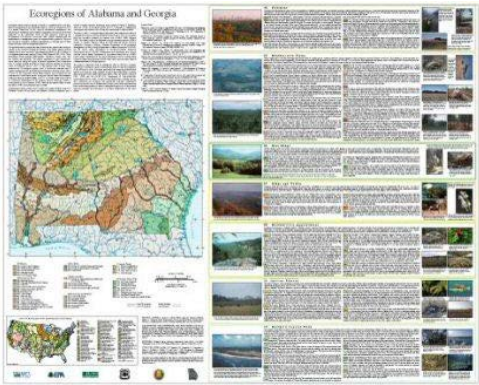
Maps (available in PDF format)

- [Level IV Ecoregions of Alabama and Georgia--poster front side 46" X 36" \(6.2 mb\)](#)
- [Level IV Ecoregions of Alabama and Georgia--poster back side 46" X 36" \(240 kb\)](#)
- [Level III Ecoregions of Alabama--page size \(584 kb\)](#)
- [Level III and IV Ecoregions of Alabama--page size \(604 kb\)](#)

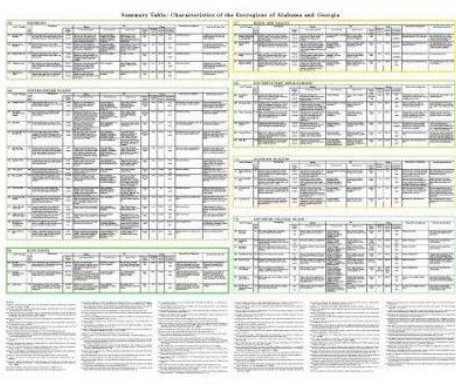
Ecoregion Descriptions (MSWord documents)

- [Alabama descriptions \(44 kb\)](#)
- [Alabama and Georgia tabular descriptions \(116 kb\)](#)
- [Alabama tabular descriptions \(84 kb\)](#)

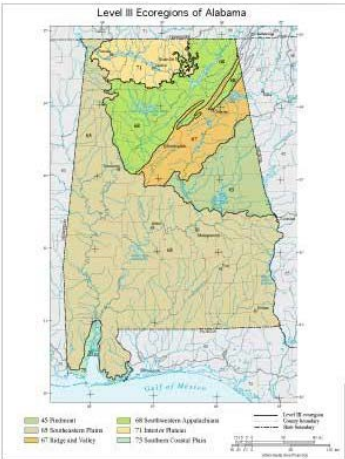
Map Thumbnails	



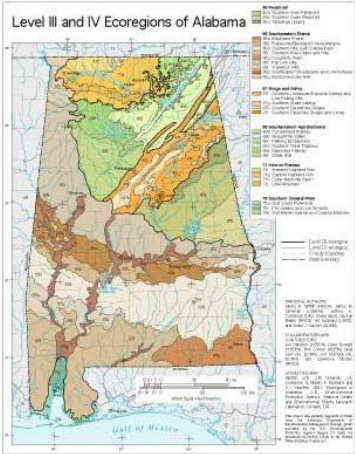
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Ecoregions denote areas of general similarity in ecosystems and in the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources. They are designed to serve as a spatial framework for the research, assessment, management, and monitoring of ecosystems and ecosystem components. Ecoregions are directly applicable to the immediate needs of state agencies, including the development of biological criteria and water quality standards and the establishment of management goals for nonpoint-source pollution. They are also relevant to integrated ecosystem management, an ultimate goal of many federal and state resource management agencies.

The approach used to compile this map is based on the premise that ecological regions can be identified through the analysis of the spatial patterns and the composition of biotic and abiotic phenomena that affect or reflect differences in ecosystem quality and integrity (Wiken 1986; Omernik 1987, 1995). These phenomena include geology, physiography, vegetation, climate, soils, land use, wildlife, and hydrology. The relative importance of each characteristic varies from one ecological region to another regardless of the hierarchical level. A Roman numeral hierarchical scheme has been adopted for different levels of ecological regions. Level I is the coarsest level, dividing North America into 15 ecological regions. Level II divides the continent into 52 regions (Commission for Environmental Cooperation Working Group 1997). At level III, the continental United States contains 104 ecoregions and the conterminous United States has 84 ecoregions (United States Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA] 2000). Level IV is a further subdivision of level III ecoregions. Explanations of the methods used to define the USEPA's ecoregions are given in Omernik (1995), Omernik and others (2000), Griffith and others (1994), and Gallant and others (1989).

Alabama and Georgia contain barrier islands and coastal lowlands, large river floodplain forests, rolling plains and plateaus, forested mountains, and a variety of aquatic habitats. Ecological and biological diversity is enormous. There are 7 level III ecoregions and 44 level IV ecoregions in Alabama and Georgia and most continue into ecologically similar parts of adjacent states.

The level III and IV ecoregion map on this poster was compiled at a scale of 1:250,000 and depicts revisions and subdivisions of earlier level III ecoregions that were originally compiled at a smaller scale (USEPA 2000; Omernik 1987). This poster is part of a collaborative project primarily between USEPA Region IV, USEPA National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (Corvallis, Oregon), Alabama Department of

Environmental Management (ADEM), Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR), and the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Collaboration and consultation also occurred with the United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USFS), United States Department of the Interior-Geological Survey (USGS)-Earth Resources Observation Systems (EROS) Data Center, and with other State of Alabama and State of Georgia agencies.

The project is associated with an interagency effort to develop a common framework of ecological regions. Reaching that objective requires recognition of the differences in the conceptual approaches and mapping methodologies applied to develop the most common ecoregion-type frameworks, including those developed by the USFS (Bailey and others, 1994), the USEPA (Omernik 1987, 1995), and the NRCS (U.S. Department of Agriculture-Soil Conservation Service, 1981). As each of these frameworks is further refined, their differences are becoming less discernible. Regional collaborative projects such as this one in Alabama and Georgia, where some agreement has been reached among multiple resource management agencies, is a step toward attaining consensus and consistency in ecoregion frameworks for the entire nation.

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