

Flooding Fallout

Sometimes flooding can trigger landslides or mudslides. When masses of rock, earth, or debris move down a slope, that's a landslide. Landslides aren't always caused by floods, but they can be. A common type of fast-moving landslide that tends to flow in channels is a mudslide. Like floods, landslides and mudslides can do all kinds of damage. They can also be deadly. In the United States, they cause 25 to 50 deaths each year.



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Colombia: A landslide falls on a road outside of Bogota.



Courtesy of Jim Bowers, USGS

Southern California: This 2005 landslide was caused by months of record heavy rainfall.

WOWSER!

Sometimes inch-long fish are placed in pools—man-made or caused by flooding—to help hold down mosquito numbers. The fish devour mosquito larvae and, in doing so, help prevent the spread of diseases that mosquitos carry.

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Tiny minnows swim in a flooded swimming pool.

Discussion questions.

1. What kind of help might a family need if their home was affected by a landslide?
2. What action could be taken to help prevent deaths from mudslides or landslides?
3. Some of these photos show solutions to problems. Which ones?



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- 1 **Pakistan:** A boy sets up a temporary shelter in a tree.
- 2 **China:** People inspect a bridge destroyed by a flood.
- 3 **Iowa:** Two ducks float past gravestones in a flooded cemetery. Sometimes flooding can dislodge coffins and even send them floating into nearby neighborhoods!
- 4 **Iowa:** A sign warns of raw sewage in floodwater during the Mississippi River flood of 2008. Contaminated water can make people sick.
- 5 **Mexico:** A family rests in a shelter after leaving their flooded home. Temporary shelters often can be schools, churches, tents, even parking garages.
- 6 **Mississippi:** In May 2011, farmers worked to harvest or salvage crops as floodwaters from the lower Mississippi River crept across their fields. Thousands of acres of corn, wheat, soybeans, and cotton crops went underwater as tributaries backed up from the flooding along the Mississippi River.