

CHAPTER 8 VOCABULARY - Aquatic Biodiversity

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aquatic	Pertaining to water. Compare <i>terrestrial</i> .
aquatic life zone	Marine and freshwater portions of the biosphere. Examples include freshwater life zones (such as lakes and streams) and ocean or marine life zones (such as estuaries, coastlines, coral reefs, and the open ocean).
benthos	Bottom-dwelling organisms. Compare <i>decomposer</i> , <i>nekton</i> , <i>plankton</i> .
coastal wetland	Land along a coastline, extending inland from an estuary that is covered with salt water all or part of the year. Examples include marshes, bays, lagoons, tidal flats, and mangrove swamps. Compare <i>inland wetland</i> .
coastal zone	Warm, nutrient-rich, shallow part of the ocean that extends from the high-tide mark on land to the edge of a shelflike extension of continental land masses known as the continental shelf. Compare <i>open sea</i> .
coral reef	Formation produced by massive colonies containing billions of tiny coral animals, called polyps, that secrete a stony substance (calcium carbonate) around themselves for protection. When the corals die, their empty outer skeletons form layers and cause the reef to grow. Coral reefs are found in the coastal zones of warm tropical and subtropical oceans.
cultural eutrophication	Overnourishment of aquatic ecosystems with plant nutrients (mostly nitrates and phosphates) because of human activities such as agriculture, urbanization, and discharges from industrial plants and sewage treatment plants. See <i>eutrophication</i> .
decomposer	Organism that digests parts of dead organisms, and cast-off fragments and wastes of living organisms by breaking down the complex organic molecules in those materials into simpler inorganic compounds and then absorbing the soluble nutrients. Producers return most of these chemicals to the soil and water for reuse. Decomposers consist of various bacteria and fungi. Compare <i>consumer</i> , <i>detritivore</i> , <i>producer</i> .
drainage basin	See <i>watershed</i> .
estuary	Partially enclosed coastal area at the mouth of a river where its freshwater, carrying fertile silt and runoff from the land, mixes with salty seawater.
euphotic zone	Upper layer of a body of water through which sunlight can penetrate and support photosynthesis.
eutrophic lake	Lake with a large or excessive supply of plant nutrients, mostly nitrates and phosphates. Compare <i>mesotrophic lake</i> , <i>oligotrophic lake</i> .
forest	Biome with enough average annual precipitation to support the growth of tree species and smaller forms of vegetation. Compare <i>desert</i> , <i>grassland</i> .
freshwater life zones	Aquatic systems where water with a dissolved salt concentration of less than 1% by volume accumulates on or flows through the surfaces of terrestrial biomes. Examples include standing (lentic) bodies of freshwater such as lakes, ponds, and inland wetlands and flowing (lotic) systems such as streams and rivers. Compare <i>biome</i> .
hypereutrophic	Result of excessive inputs of nutrients in a lake. See <i>cultural eutrophication</i> .
inland wetland	Land away from the coast, such as a swamp, marsh, or bog, that is covered all or part of the time with freshwater. Compare <i>coastal wetland</i> .
intertidal zone	The area of shoreline between low and high tides.

lake	Large natural body of standing freshwater formed when water from precipitation, land runoff, or groundwater flow fills a depression in the earth created by glaciation, earth movement, volcanic activity, or a giant meteorite. See <i>eutrophic lake</i> , <i>mesotrophic lake</i> , <i>oligotrophic lake</i> .
mangrove swamps	Swamps found on the coastlines in warm tropical climates. They are dominated by mangrove trees, any of about 55 species of trees and shrubs that can live partly submerged in the salty environment of coastal swamps.
marine life zone	See <i>saltwater life zone</i> .
mesotrophic lake	Lake with a moderate supply of plant nutrients. Compare <i>eutrophic lake</i> , <i>oligotrophic lake</i> .
nekton	Strongly swimming organisms found in aquatic systems. Compare <i>benthos</i> , <i>plankton</i> .
oligotrophic lake	Lake with a low supply of plant nutrients. Compare <i>eutrophic lake</i> , <i>mesotrophic lake</i> .
open sea	Part of an ocean that lies beyond the continental shelf. Compare <i>coastal zone</i> .
plankton	Small plant organisms (phytoplankton) and animal organisms (zooplankton) that float in aquatic ecosystems.
runoff	Freshwater from precipitation and melting ice that flows on the earth's surface into nearby streams, lakes, wetlands, and reservoirs. See <i>reliable runoff</i> , <i>surface runoff</i> , <i>surface water</i> . Compare <i>groundwater</i> .
saltwater intrusion	Movement of saltwater or brackish (slightly salty) water into freshwater aquifers in coastal and inland areas as groundwater is withdrawn faster than it is recharged by precipitation.
saltwater life zones	Aquatic life zones associated with oceans: oceans and their accompanying bays, estuaries, coastal wetlands, shorelines, coral reefs, and mangrove forests.
stream	Flowing body of surface water. Examples are creeks and rivers.
surface water	Precipitation that does not infiltrate the ground or return to the atmosphere by evaporation or transpiration. See <i>runoff</i> . Compare <i>groundwater</i> .
turbidity	Cloudiness in a volume of water; a measure of water clarity in lakes, streams, and other bodies of water.
watershed	Land area that delivers water, sediment, and dissolved substances via small streams to a major stream (river).
wetland	Land that is covered all or part of the time with salt water or freshwater, excluding streams, lakes, and the open ocean. See <i>coastal wetland</i> , <i>inland wetland</i> .
zooplankton	Animal plankton; small floating herbivores that feed on plant plankton (phytoplankton). Compare <i>phytoplankton</i> .