

Marine Ecology Vocabulary

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| Aquarius | An underwater research facility where scientists can conduct research on the marine ecosystem |
| Benthic | The area of the sea bottom, and all the organisms that live on the sea bottom |
| Biodiversity | The variability of organisms located in a ecosystem. |
| Climate change/global warming | Increase in average global temperature due to building up of gases such as CO ₂ , NO ₂ , and chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere. |
| Coloniality | The process by which a species lives or grows together. |
| Coral | Small ant-sized marine organisms that often live in colonies. Hard species produce calcite skeletons that make up the foundation of the coral reef. |
| Coral bleaching | Expelling of zooxanthellae from the tissues of reef building corals. Prolonged bleaching can result in coral mortality. |
| Coral reef | A biogenetic structure built over thousands of years by tiny coral polyps that make up colonies. This complex structure allows thousands of other plants and animals to thrive in an otherwise hostile marine tropical desert. |
| Ecosystem | The study of the relationship between the organism and the environment as well as the relationship between organisms. |
| Filter feeder | Animals that obtain their food by filtering particles out of the water. |
| Food Chain | The pathway that transfers energy from the producers(plants) to the consumers(predators) |
| Food web | The interaction of all food chains in an ecosystem |
| Foundation species (ecosystem engineer) | The organism that is the major builder of a habitat in an ecosystem. Coral is the foundation species for a coral reef ecosystem. |
| Habitat destruction | Destruction of the places where animals live through human impact or natural disasters |
| Herbivory | The process of animals (herbivores) grazing on autotrophic organisms. |
| Mangrove Forest | A tropical inshore community that is dominated by several species of trees or shrubs that grow in salt water. |
| Marine ecologist | A person who studies marine organisms and the marine environment in which they are found. |

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| Marine ecology | The study of marine environments and the organisms found in these environments |
| Non-point source pollution | An unknown source of pollution (fertilizer runoff from lawns) |
| Point Source Pollution | A known source of pollution that can be identified (leak from sewage plant) |
| Salinity | The amount of dissolved salts in water. |
| Sea level rise | Melting of glaciers due to global warming causes the Earth's oceans to expand. |
| Seagrass Community | Shallow sea bottom areas covered by lush growth of flowering plants that have adapted to live submerged in seawater. |
| Sediment | Earth materials deposited by erosion. Sediment being dumped into the ocean by fresh water runoff has an adverse affect on the coral. |
| Sponges | A simple multicellular filter-feeding marine organism. |
| Sustainable Practices | People live within an environment without over taxing its resources. |
| Symbiosis | The interrelationship between two different species in which both species benefit |
| Transect | A line crossing an area of study on which data is be collected. |
| Turbidity | Condition of reduced visibility in water due to the presence of suspended particles. |
| Zooxanthellae | Single-celled microalgae that have a symbiotic relationship, living within the tissues of coral (They use the coral waste products as nutrients and provide energy to the coral.) |