

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

Habitat
destruction

Destruction of the places where animals live through human impact or natural disasters

Sea level
rise

Melting of glaciers due to global warming causes the Earth's oceans to expand.

Coral bleaching

Expelling of zooxanthellae from the tissues of reef-building corals. Can result in coral mortality.

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.)

Coral

Small ant-sized marine organisms that often live in colonies. Hard species produce calcite skeletons that make up the foundation of these kind of reefs.

Sponges

A simple multicellular filter-feeding marine organisms.

Herbivory

The process of animals (herbivores) grazing on autotrophic organisms.

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

Point
Source
Pollution

A known source of pollution that can be identified (leak from sewage plant)

Non-point
source
pollution

An unknown source of pollution
(fertilizer runoff from lawns)

Transect

A line crossing an area of study on
which data is be collected.

Marine
ecologist

A person who studies marine
organisms and the marine
environment in which they are
found.

Marine
ecology

The study of marine environments
and the organisms found in these
environments

Sediment

Earth materials deposited by erosion. Sediment being dumped into the ocean by fresh water runoff has an adverse affect on the coral.

Turbidity

Condition of reduced visibility in water due to the presence of suspended particles.

Symbiosis

The interrelationship between two different species in which both species benefit

Ecosystem

The study of the relationship between the organism and the environment as well as the relationship between organisms.

Biodiversity

The variability of organisms located in an ecosystem.

Mangrove Forest

A tropical inshore community that is dominated by several species of trees or shrubs that grow in salt water.

Seagrass Community

Shallow sea bottom areas covered by lush growth of flowering plants that have adapted to live submerged in seawater.

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.

Filter feeder

Animals that obtain their food by filtering particles out of the water.

Foundation species

The organism that is the major builder of a habitat in an ecosystem. Coral is the foundation species for a coral reef ecosystem.

Coloniality

The process by which a species lives or grows together.

Climate Change/ Global Warming

Increase in average global temperature due to building up of gases such as CO₂, NO₂, and chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere.

Salinity

The amount of dissolved salts in water.

Sustainable
Practices

People live within an environment without over-taxing its resources.