



Vocabulary

Abiotic – The non-living components of an ecosystem (e.g., sunlight, physical and chemical characteristics).

Animal – A multicellular organism that can move, feed itself, digest its food, remove its waste, respond to its environment, and reproduce.

AutoAnalyzer – A device used to test the chemical properties of various substances.

Biotic – The living components of an ecosystem (e.g., animals and plants).

Carnivore – A consumer that only eats other animals.

Chlorophyll – The main pigment of photosynthesis.

Conductivity – A measure of the ability of water to pass an electrical charge.

Consumer – An organism that eats or consumes other organisms to survive.

Ecosystem – A community of organisms and the non-living environment they inhabit.

Euphotic Zone – The water layer with sufficient light for photosynthesis.

Food Chain – A series of organisms linked together by the transfer of food energy from one population of organisms to another population of organisms.

Food Web – A series of interlocking and independent food chains found in an ecosystem.

Herbivore – A consumer that only eats photosynthetic plants and/or algae.

Hydrolab – A device with multiple sensors that measures many water quality properties.

Nutrients – Elements or chemicals required to sustain life, including carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, and phosphorus.

Omnivore – A consumer that eats both plants/algae and animals.

Organism – A living creature. Examples are plants, animals, bacteria.

Pathogen – An organism (bacteria, virus, etc.) that can cause disease.

Plankton – Microscopic organisms that float or drift in oceans and freshwater.

Phytoplankton – A single-celled diatom (microscopic algae) that photosynthesizes and drifts with the currents in lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands.

Plant – An organism that produces its own food to survive.

Producer – An organism that can use light or chemical energy to produce its own food from inorganic (non-living) substances (ex. plant, algae, or cyanobacteria) typically via photosynthesis.

Secchi Disk – A black and white or all white 20 cm disk attached to a cord used to measure water transparency.

Septic System – An individual wastewater treatment system that includes a septic tank for removing solids, and a leach field for discharging the clarified wastewater to the ground.

Spectrometer – A measuring device that collects light waves to determine the material that emitted the energy.

Thermal Stratification – The process by which a lake or pond forms several distinct thermal layers.

Thermocline – The region of the greatest vertical temperature change in a stratified water body.

Tributary – A stream or river that flows into a larger river or lake.

Turbidity – A measure of the light scattering properties of water; describes water clarity or the presence or absence of suspended materials in water.

Water Transparency – The amount of light that penetrates into a lake or stream.

Zooplankton – A microscopic animal that drifts with the water that consumes phytoplankton to survive.

