

Ecosystems and Biomes ▪ *Section Summary*

Aquatic Ecosystems

Guide for Reading

- What are the two major types of aquatic ecosystems?

There are two types of aquatic, or water-based, ecosystems: **freshwater ecosystems and marine (or saltwater) ecosystems**. Freshwater biomes include ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers. Because water absorbs sunlight, there is only enough light for photosynthesis near the surface or in shallow water. Algae are the most common producers in freshwater biomes.

The ocean has different zones. An **estuary** is found where the fresh water of a river meets the salt water of the ocean. The part of the shore between the highest high-tide line and the lowest low-tide line is called the **intertidal zone**. Below the low-tide line is the **neritic zone**, a region of shallow water over the continental shelf. Floating algae are the producers in most open-ocean food webs. Below the open ocean's surface zone is the deep zone, which is completely dark.