

Vocabulary



acid rain rain that is more acidic than normal

Most lakes and streams have a pH of 6 to 8. Acid rain has a pH of 4.2 to 5.6. The acid rain falls into lakes and streams. Many aquatic plants and animals cannot survive in the polluted water.

algae bloom an increase in the growth of algae

The increase is often caused by pollutants. When the algae die and decompose, oxygen in the water is used up. Without oxygen, fish and other living things in the aquatic habitat die, too.

decomposer an organism that feeds on dead organisms

Examples of decomposers include mold, fungi, insects, and bacteria. All food chains end with decomposers.

pH scale measures how acidic a liquid is

The scale ranges from 0 to 14. Substances with a pH lower than 7 are acids. Substances with a pH higher than 7 are bases.

pollutant anything in the environment that can harm living things or damage natural resources

Chemicals that are dumped into rivers can cause fish to die. Smoke can pollute air, harming all organisms that breathe the air. Garbage dumps pollute the land when harmful materials in them leak into water or soil.