

# Glossary

**Adaptation**

a physical, chemical, or behavioral change made by a species or an individual organism which improves its relationship to its environment

**Assessment**

the action of determining the amount or value of something

**Atmospheric deposition**

nonpoint source pollution that travels through the air and is deposited on land and water

**Bag limit**

the number of fish of a certain species from a certain body of water that an angler can keep on a single day

**Barbels**

slender, whisker-like taste receptors found on certain fish, such as catfish, bullheads, and sturgeon; used to find food

**Benthic Zone**

the bottom of a lake

**Bioaccumulation**

the build-up of substances, such as pesticides or other toxins, in an organism

**Biomass**

the total mass of live plants and animals in a given area

**Chordate**

animal that belongs to the phylum Chordata (has a notochord for at least part of its life cycle)

**Conservation Congress**

the citizen group that suggests regulation changes to the Natural Resources Board

**Consumer**

an organism that cannot produce its own food and must eat other organisms to survive

**Degraded**

lowered to a less desirable or less diverse level

**Dichotomous key**

a system of classification used to identify organisms by moving from broad differences to specific distinctions

**Dissolved oxygen**

molecules of oxygen mixed into water

**Distal**

located away from the central point or origin

**Distribution**

the range, or geographic locations, of an organism

**Dorsal**

located on the back of an animal

**Dynamic**

continually changing

**Ecology**

the study of the interrelationship between environments and organisms

**Ecotone**

a transition area between two different ecological communities

**Ecosystem**

closed communities of interdependent plants, animals, and non-living factors

**Effluent**

waste material released into the environment

**Emergent**

near-shore plants rooted in shallow water with most vegetative growth above water

**Epilimnion**

the top layer of lake water, often warmest in the summer and frozen in winter

**Erosion**

the process of soil and other natural materials being worn away

**Eutrophic**

characterized by having a high level of nutrients; often used to describe a lake or pond with low oxygen and thick plant growth

**Eutrophication**

the process of adding nutrients to a waterbody

**Exotic species**

species that live in environments where they are not native

**Extirpate**

a species that has disappeared from part of its native environment, but is not extinct

**Fingerling**

a young fish

**Floating leaf**

plants rooted in the lake bottom; their leaves and flowers float on the water surface

**Fragmentation**

the process of dividing landscapes or watersheds into parcels that are isolated

**Fry**

newly-hatched fish

**Harvest**

to gather, catch, hunt, or kill for human use, sport, or recreation

**Hatchery**

a place where eggs are hatched, either human-made or natural

**Headwaters**

the origin, or beginning, of a stream or river

**Hypolimnion**

The bottom layer of lake or pond water

**Inferior**

located nearer the lower extremity of a body

**Invasive species**

an exotic species that tends to spread, causing environmental or economic harm

**Land cover**

the visible features on a landscape

**Land use**

the cultural and economic activities that take place on a landscape

**Lateral**

located on or near the side of the body

**Lateral line**

a canal along the side of a fish containing pores with sensory organs that detect vibrations

**Limiting factor**

a factor in the environment that limits the growth, abundance, or distribution of organisms in an ecosystem

**Limnetic zone**

the open-water zone away from shore where light is abundant

**Littoral zone**

the shallow area of a lake or pond where plants are able to grow

**Marsh**

a wetland that is rich in plant life, especially grasses and cattails; excellent fish spawning habitat

**Medial**

located near the middle (mid-line) of the body

**Mesotrophic**

characterized by having a moderate amount of nutrients

**Moratorium**

the suspension of an activity for a period of time

**Morphology**

the shape or structure of an organism

**Mouth**

the end of a stream or river, where it empties into another waterbody

**Native species**

a species that lives in its natural environment

**Natural Resources Board**

a group of citizens selected by the governor which makes policy decisions for the Wisconsin DNR

**Natural selection**

the process that results in the survival and reproductive success of individuals or groups best adapted to their environment

**Neurotoxin**

a poison which affects the brain or nervous system

**Niche**

the specific role an organism or a population plays within an ecosystem

**Nonpoint source pollution**

contamination that comes from many sources across a landscape; often carried into waterbodies by runoff

**Notochord**

a flexible, primitive backbone that provides support in chordate embryos. As vertebrates (the highest class of chordates) develop, the notochord is replaced by spinal vertebrae.

**Oligotrophic**

characterized by having few nutrients

**Persistent organic pollutant**

a contaminant that does not break down easily or quickly in the environment

**Physiology**

the study of the functions of living organisms

**Phytoplankton**

microscopic floating plants

**Poikilotherm**

an organism that cannot regulate its own body temperature; the temperature of the organism matches that of the surrounding environment

**Point source pollution**

a particular, identifiable source of contamination

**Primary producer**

an organism which creates its own food through photosynthesis

**Profundal**

deep dark lake zone below the limnetic zone

**Proximal**

located near the center of the body

**Public Trust Doctrine**

a body of common law that protects navigable waters for the common good

**Redd**

the nest or spawning ground of a fish

**Regulation**

a rule dealing with details or procedures

**Restore**

to repair damage (in this case, to an ecosystem)

**Rheotactic**

orienting upstream

**Rule of 10**

a law of nature that says that approximately 10 percent of available energy passes from one trophic level to the next and the rest is lost as heat

**Runoff**

precipitation not absorbed by the soil; often carries nonpoint source pollution with it into a waterbody

**Spawn**

to produce and deposit eggs (generally refers to fish, amphibians, and mollusks)

**Stakeholder**

a person who has an interest in a decision, but is not responsible for making that decision; for example, a private landholder may be a stakeholder in a decision the county makes about the stream running through her property

**Stewardship**

the careful and responsible management of something

**Stock**

the act of putting quantities of fish in a lake, stream, or other waterbody for recreational or scientific purposes

**Stratify**

to become layered; lakes are stratified by temperature

**Stressor**

an action or agent that puts stress on an organism

**Submerged**

rooted plants that grow entirely underwater, although some leaves may float above water. They grow from near shore to the deepest part of the littoral zone.

**Substrate**

the layer of material, such as clay or gravel, found on the bottom of a waterbody

**Superior**

located higher on a body, nearer the upper extremity

**Sustainable practices**

the use and management of a resource that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Swim bladder**

the swim bladder (also gas bladder or air bladder) is an internal gas-filled organ allows a fish to control its buoyancy and depth in the water.

**Taxonomic groups**

a group of closely related plants or animals

**Terrestrial**

land-based, not aquatic; as in a terrestrial organism or habitat

**Thermocline**

a layer of water in a lake in which the temperature change is most abrupt; found below the epilimnion

**Thermoregulate**

to maintain a constant body temperature; humans thermoregulate, fish do not

**Tragedy of the Commons**

unsustainable rates of use or abuse of a resource held in common

**Tributary**

a stream or river that flows into a larger stream or waterbody

**Trophic level**

feeding position in the food pyramid; primary producers are the lowest trophic level

**Ventral**

located opposite the back, on the front or belly

**Vertebrates**

animals with backbones

**Watershed**

a region or area that all drains to the same body of water

**Wetland**

an area that is a transition between an aquatic and a terrestrial environment; saturated for at least one period of time each year

**Zoning**

division of a city (or other region) into sections reserved for certain purposes (homes or businesses)