

Freshwater lakes

Lakes have different zones. The very shallow water close to the lake shore is a different zone to the very deep water in the middle of the lake. Different plants and animals live in the different zones.

The littoral zone: this is the shallow water near the lake edge. This zone gets a lot of sunlight and nutrients, which are washed off the land. More plants and fish live in this zone because it is warm, well lit and there is a lot of food. Lots of little rotters (decomposers like bacteria and fungi) live here as well as frogs, snails, insects and fish.

The limnetic zone: this is the open-water area of the lake that still gets a lot of sunlight. This zone goes as far down as the sunlight can reach. Fish and tiny little plants (called phytoplankton) and tiny animals (called zooplankton) live here.

The profundal zone: this is the deep open-water. It is too dark for plants but some fish live here.

The benthic zone: this is at the very bottom of the lake. It is cold and dark here! Fungi and bacteria live in this zone, along with some larvae (baby insects).

