

*Important Concepts . . .*

# **Preview Review**



***Science***

***Grade 8***

***W3 - Lesson 4: Adaptations to Aquatic  
Ecosystems***

## Important Concepts of Grade 8 Science

## Materials Required

W1 - Lesson 1 .....	Mass, Volume, and Density
W1 - Lesson 2 .....	Solubility and Saturation Points
W1 - Lesson 3A.....	Viscosity, Flow Rate, and Buoyancy
W1 - Lesson 3B.....	Simple Machines
W1 - Lesson 4 .....	Gears, Mechanical Advantage, Speed Ratios, and Efficiency
W1 - Lesson 5 .....	Hydraulics and Pneumatics
W1- Quiz	
W2 - Lesson 1 ....	The Role of Cells within Living Things, Cells-Tissue-Organ System
W2 - Lesson 2 .....	The Microscope
W2 - Lesson 3 .....	Body Systems Part 1
W2 - Lesson 4 .....	Body Systems Part 2
W2 - Lesson 5 .....	Problems Associated with Body Systems
W2 - Quiz	
W3 - Lesson 1 .....	Transmission and Absorption of Light
W3 - Lesson 2 .....	Reflection and Refraction of Light
W3 - Lesson 3A.....	Vision and Lenses
W3 - Lesson 3B..	Water in its Various States Affects Earth's Landforms and Climate
W3 - Lesson 4 .....	Adaptations to Aquatic Ecosystems
W3 - Lesson 5 .....	Water Quality
W3 - Quiz .....	

Textbook:  
*Science in  
Action 8*

Science Grade 8

Version 5

Preview/Review W3 - Lesson 4

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# Preview/Review Concepts for Grade Eight Science



***W3 - Lesson 4:  
Adaptations to Aquatic  
Ecosystems***

# OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you should

- explain the concept of Natural Selection
- describe some adaptations of organisms living in aquatic ecosystems
- list and describe factors that cause adaptations in aquatic organisms
- describe how humans have influenced the adaptation of aquatic organisms

## GLOSSARY

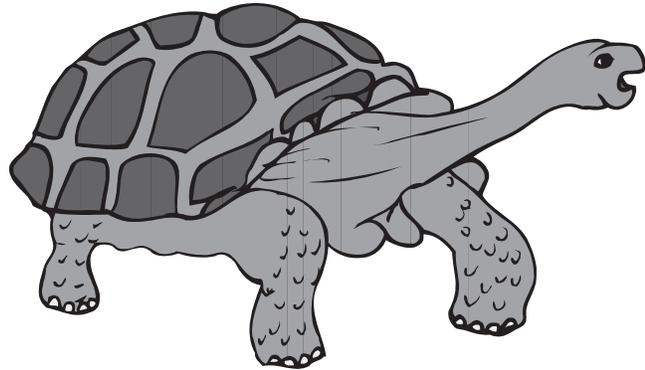
**adaptation** - a feature that gives an organism a better chance of surviving in a particular environment

**evolution** - change in a species over time

**natural selection** - the process where individuals well suited to their environment survive and pass on their advantageous traits (Others not suited to the environment die.)

## W3 - Lesson 4: Adaptations to Aquatic Ecosystems

Welcome to W3 - Lesson 4. This lesson is designed to teach you about **adaptations to aquatic ecosystems**. It should take about 1.5 hours to complete this lesson; there will be a small homework assignment at the end.

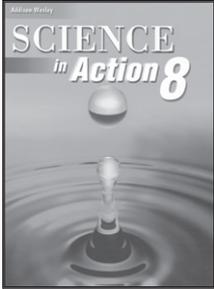


### Adaptations to Aquatic Ecosystems.

The term **aquatic life** refers to organisms that live in water. **Ecosystems** are a network of interactions linking living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic) things. Therefore, **aquatic ecosystems** are areas of water where organisms live.

The role an organism plays in its environment is called a **niche**. Ecosystems are as diverse in the different kinds of species as people within a town. The more complex the ecosystem, the more diversity is shown.

The more **adaptative** a species is to changes in an environment, the greater its chances of survival within that habitat. Therefore, adaptation to aquatic ecosystems means **survival of the fittest**. Organisms that fail to adapt to changes in their environment become extinct. Organisms who have adjusted to the new environment and survive are able to pass these distinctive characteristics on through generations. This is more commonly known as **natural selection**. This natural selection process over time allows those organisms to evolve into more adaptable species, which is called **evolution**.



### Activity 1

Read and understand pages 374 to 377 in *Science in Action 8*. Then, answer the following questions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a physical characteristic or behaviour of a species developed through time.

2. List and describe three different adaptations that aquatic animals possess.

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3. Define diversity in an ecosystem.

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4. How is the ocean able to support a great diversity of living things?

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## Factors that Cause Adaptations

Organisms in water adapt for several reasons. **Temperature** is an important factor. Each species has a temperature range in which it can survive. Tropical fish are not able to survive and reproduce in Alberta's cold mountain lakes. Similarly, some species of fish cannot survive in warm water year round. For example, Arctic char cannot survive in water at the equator because some of their life processes requires very cold water for part of the year.

**Light** is another factor. Most organisms thrive in light. Plants need light for photosynthesis so they can grow and reproduce. However, some organisms have adapted to low light conditions. In the deep ocean, certain species of crab do not need light to survive.

**Pressure** is a third factor. Deep water has great pressure, but certain animals can survive and thrive. A fish from extremely deep water will not survive when brought to the surface because the lower pressure will damage it.

The fourth factor is **salinity**. Salinity refers to the amounts of minerals and salts in water. Ocean water has high salinity because it is very salty. Some inland lakes have high salinity because the rivers and streams feeding them flow through soil and/or rock containing salt and pick up more of the salts and minerals from the riverbed. This higher concentration gets even higher when it is deposited into one place such as a lake.

Most freshwater organisms cannot live in salt water. The salt in the water actually draws fluid out of their organs and kills them. Some species have adapted. Certain salmon species spend part of their lives in the ocean and part in freshwater rivers. The explanation of this adaptation goes back to the time when there were continental glaciers in North America. These glaciers covered the lakes and rivers causing the fish to move, in this case, to the ocean such as the Bering Strait Refugia (a refuge for fish). Those fish that survived adapted back to fresh water, such as many of the trout species did, and some adapted to using both fresh and salt water as part of their life cycles.



**Water movement** is also a factor for adaptation. Some plants and animals prefer fast wave action water and thrive there. Some plants and animals prefer very still water, such as in a swamp.



- Choose an adaptation an aquatic animal has developed and describe how the animal has changed physically or behaviourally.

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- What other factors may cause aquatic species to adapt?

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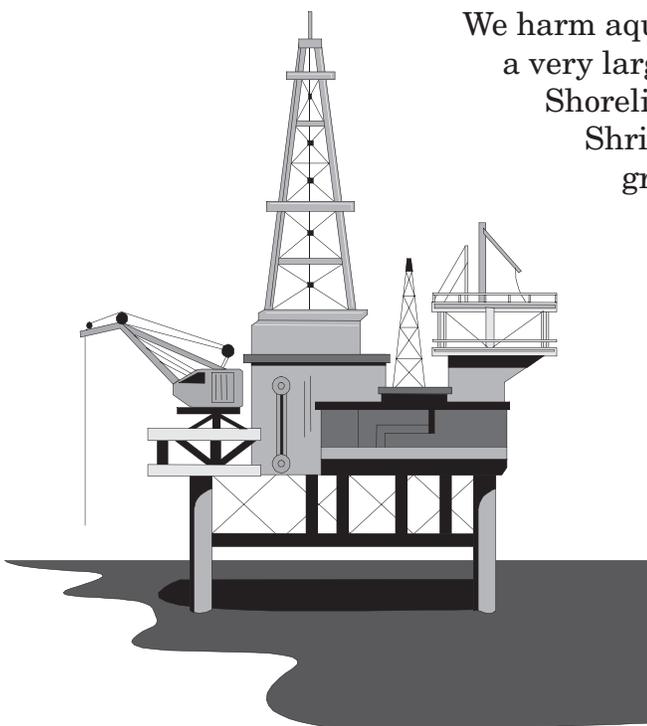
### Aquatic Adaptations with Human Interaction

Organisms have adapted to the natural environment over long periods of time. Although organisms have the ability to evolve in an ever-changing environment, the most difficult task is to adapt to human patterns of life. This is because the changes we make are often very major and quick.

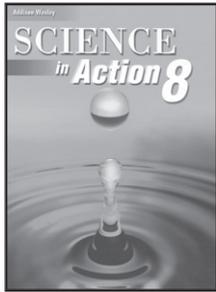
We harm aquatic ecosystems in many ways. Loss of habitat is a very large concern. Wetlands are drained to plant crops. Shorelines are altered to become attractive beaches.

Shrimp and fish farms fill areas where once a diverse group of organisms lived. We pollute bodies of water with our sewage and when we drill for oil and gas. Pesticides and other chemicals run into waterways. Humans have also introduced new plant and animal species to foreign areas. They interact with, and sometimes seriously harm, native species. All of this has a great effect on the diversity in all types of aquatic ecosystems.

Human interaction does not allow for many generations of organisms to deal with the changes; rather, we demand immediate change. This has caused extinction and near-extinction of many species.



Fortunately government agencies in many parts of the world are starting to recognize the impact that humans have on aquatic species and are conducting research to reduce the impact of some of these activities. They are also providing guidance in how activities affecting water and the organisms that rely on it should be performed.



### Activity 3

Read and understand the previous paragraphs and pages 383 to 384 in *Science in Action 8*. Then, answer the following questions.

1. In your own words, describe two human-caused problems aquatic species encounter. What effects do these problems have on aquatic species?

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2. Use the Internet or other sources of information. In a few sentences, describe a problem caused by man that is affecting an aquatic species.

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