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Factors Affecting Aquatic Ecosystems

Variability and change are natural processes in aquatic ecosystems, and ecosystem communities and individual organisms have in many cases adapted to different environmental conditions.

Human effects on aquatic ecosystems can result from pollution, changes to the landscape or hydrological systems, and larger-scale impacts such as global climate change. The complexity of aquatic ecosystems and the linkages within them can make the effect of disturbances on them difficult to predict. These linkages mean that damage to one component of the ecosystem can lead to impacts on other ecosystem components. Increasing our understanding of aquatic ecosystems can lead to better practices that minimize impacts on aquatic environments.

Select natural and human influences on aquatic ecosystems are described in the following sections:

- [Natural factors](#)
- [Human influences](#)



Source: Hatfield Consultants 2008
(click to enlarge)

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