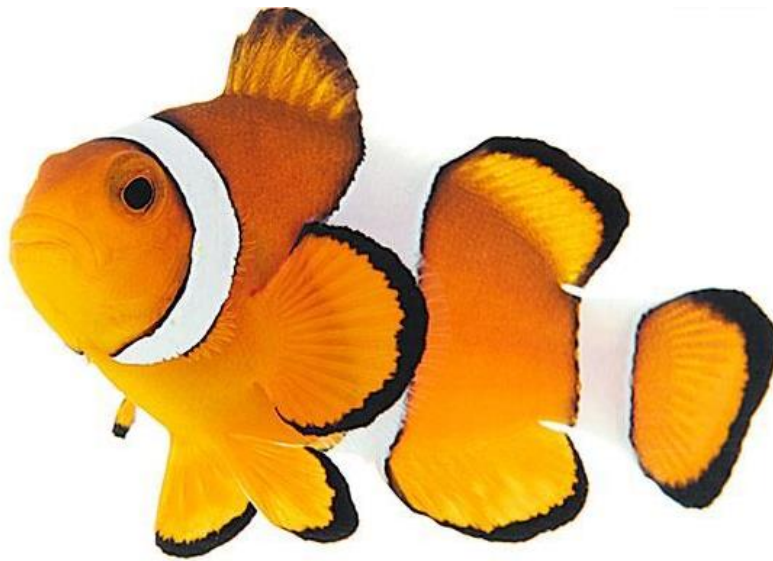


## Marine System Facts

- Marine ecosystems are aquatic ecosystems whose waters possess a **high salt content**.
- Out of all of the types of ecosystems on the planet, marine ecosystems are **the most prevalent**.
- They teem with life, providing nearly **half of the Earth's Oxygen**.



## Types of Marine Systems

### 1. Open Ocean Ecosystems

This category includes types of sea life that float or swim, such as **algae, plankton, jellyfish** and **whales**.

### 2. Ocean Floor Ecosystems

Species that live in this ecosystem include certain types of **fish, crustaceans, clams, oysters, worms, urchins, seaweed** and **smaller organisms**.

### 3. Coral Reef Ecosystems

Found only in warm tropical waters and at relatively shallow depths, coral reefs are among the **most productive** ecosystems on the planet. About one-quarter of marine species depend on coral reefs for food, shelter or both. While coral reefs are famous for attracting brightly coloured exotic **fish**, a plethora of other species such as **snails, sponges** and **seahorses** inhabit coral reefs.

### 4. Estuary Ecosystems

The term “estuary” typically describes the shallow, sheltered area of a river mouth where **freshwater intermingles with saltwater** as it enters the sea. The organisms inhabiting estuaries are **specially adapted** to these distinct conditions. Estuaries also serve an important function as nurseries for many types of **fish** and **shrimp**.

### 5. Saltwater Wetland Estuary Ecosystems

Found in coastal areas, saltwater wetlands may be considered a special type of estuary, as they also consist of a **transition zone between land and sea**. These wetlands can be divided into two categories: saltwater swamps and salt marshes. **Fish, shellfish, amphibians, reptiles** and **birds** may live in or seasonally migrate to wetlands.

### 6. Mangrove Ecosystems

Some tropical and subtropical coastal areas are home to special types of saltwater swamps known as mangroves. Mangrove swamps are characterized by **trees that tolerate a saline environment**, whose roots systems extend above the water line to obtain oxygen, presenting a mazelike web. Mangroves host a wide diversity of life, including **sponges, shrimp, crabs, jellyfish, fish, birds** and even **crocodiles**.

## Threats to Marine Systems

- Pollution e.g. sewage, garbage, fertilizers, pesticides, industrial chemicals, plastics
- Climate Change
- Ozone Depleting Substances
- Dredging
- Ocean Dumping
- Tourism
- Development
- Noise pollution from Ships
- Oil Spills
- Plastic
- Over-Fishing

