

Freshwater vs. Saltwater

Biomes are regions that have similar climate, animals, and plants. Let's take a closer look at the two types of aquatic biomes: **freshwater** and **marine**.

FRESHWATER BIOMES

Freshwater is defined as having less than 1% salt in it. Freshwater biomes contain either moving water, like rivers, streams, or creeks, or standing water, like ponds, wetlands, or lakes. Less than 1% of the Earth's water is in freshwater lakes. Both the temperature and the depth of the freshwater determine what plants and animals can live there. The amount of movement in the water also affects the types of life that can survive there. Freshwater animals can be large or small—some organisms that live there are only made up of a single cell. That's pretty small! The animals that live in freshwater environments depend on the water for food and survival. Some plants also live in freshwater. You may see moss growing in or near freshwater biomes. Moss often grows in freshwater environments. Many freshwater organisms rely on moss for food.

MARINE BIOMES

Marine biomes are sometimes called saltwater biomes. Marine biomes have more than 1% salt in them. Very large bodies of water, such as oceans and seas, are marine biomes. Marine biomes cover about three-fourths of the Earth! Coral reefs and estuaries are also considered marine environments. Just like in freshwater environments, the types of plants and animals that live in marine biomes depend on the depth, temperature, and movement of the water. Marine biomes support very large as well as very small animals. Marine algae supply most of the world's oxygen and take in huge amounts of carbon dioxide. Evaporation of marine water ultimately provides rainwater for our crops, snow for our mountains, and fresh water for our lakes and streams.

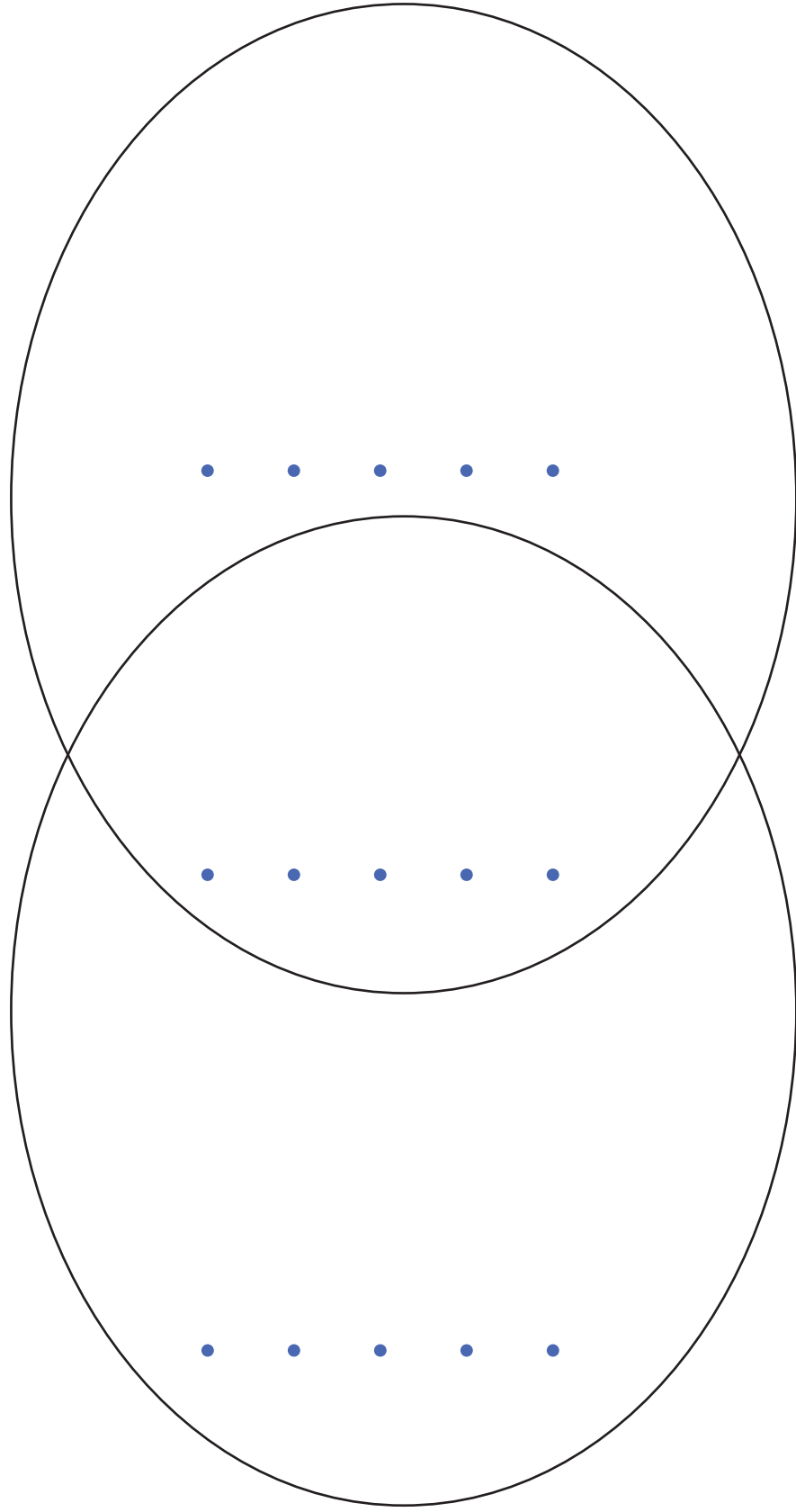
WATER

Venn Diagram

Compare and contrast freshwater and marine biomes. Record the similarities in the center, where the two circles overlap. Record the differences in the outer parts of the circles.

Freshwater

Marine (Saltwater)



WATER