

Deep Sea Ecosystem Cards

Read each ecosystem card below. Notice the descriptive clues. Match each card to one of the photos in the Deep Sea Ecosystems photo gallery.

Ecosystem Name: Hydrothermal Vent

Description: Like underwater geysers, water and chemicals shoot out of the ocean floor looking like smoke. Lots of animals live around these sources of energy, food, and community.

Ecosystem Name: Abyssal Plains

Description: A lot of the ocean is more like a desert than anything else. There are very few animals and no plants to be seen!

Ecosystem Name: Brine Pool

Description: These “underwater lakes” are areas where the water is very salty. This makes it hard for animals to live here.

Ecosystem Name: Deep Sea Chimneys

Description: Just like mountains erode and streams dry up, hydrothermal vents don’t last forever. They may stop “erupting” or an earthquake can topple the towers.

Ecosystem Name: Whale Fall

Description: When large animals—like whales—die in the ocean, they sink to the bottom, creating a great food source for other animals. These animals will live at a whale fall and make it a temporary ecosystem until the whale is decayed and there is no food left.

Ecosystem Name: Cold Seeps

Description: In some places, cold water and chemicals “seep,” or ooze out, cracks in the ground. Animals, like mussels and other shellfish, gather around these places to live and get food and energy.