



AQUATIC ECOLOGY 8

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- Photosynthesis in aquatic systems is carried out by a wide variety of autotrophs
- Their range in size from microscopic single-celled organisms to large aquatic plants called aquatic macrophytes

- Autotrophs are primary producers, because they produce the first level of organic carbon from inorganic compounds.



- Because photosynthesis depends on sunlight, the distribution of autotrophs is limited in part on the amount of light available in aquatic ecosystems.



- In shallow, stony rivers, periphyton (or biofilm) – especially diatoms and cyanobacteria – are the main source of primary production.

- In lakes and seas, phytoplankton are the main source of primary production