CMECS -- The Common Language for Marine Ecosystems

Components and Subcomponents of the Classification

Systems and Subsystems

System	Subsystem		
Marine Estuarine Lacustrine	Nearshore subtidal Nearshore intertidal Nearshore supratidal Neritic Oceanic	Shallow water subtidal Shallow water intertidal Shallow water supratidal Deep Water Deep Water Tidal Riverine Shallow Water Tidal Riverine	Limnetic Littoral

Water Column Component

Horizontal Structure	Vertical Structure
Shallow Water	Shallow Water Zone
Deep Water	Deep Water Zone
Nearshore	Epipelagic
Neritic	Mesopelagic
Oceanic	Bathypelagic
	Abyssopelagic
	Hadalpelagic

Benthic Biotic Component

Class	Subclass		Biotic Group	Biotope
Faunal Reef	Mollusk Reef, Worm Reef	Living Stony Coral Communities, Calcareous Algal Communities		
Coral Reef				
Faunal Bed	Sessile Epifauna, Mobile Epifauna, Infauna			
Aquatic Bed		Rooted Vascular, Microbial Mat, Macroalgae, Lichens	e.g. Kelp Forests	e.g. *Macrocystis* Communities
Emergent Wetland	Coastal Salt Marsh			
Scrub-shrub Wetland		Coastal Salt Scrub, Mangrove		
Forested Wetland	Mangrove			
No Known Cover				

Surface Geology Component

Class	Subclass		Group/Reef Morphology
Rock Substrate	Bedrock, Pavement	Cobble/Gravel, Sands, Muds. Organic, Shell, Mixed Sediments, Reef Rubble	e.g. Fine Mixes, Patch Reef, Fringing Reef
Unconsolidated Substrate			
Faunal Reef	e.g. Mollusk Reef, Worm Reef	Reef Lagoon, Back Reef, Reef Flat, Reef Crest, Forereef, Deep Forereef, Pinnacle Reef, Mesophotic Reef, Deep Cold-Water Reef, Outlier Reef	
Coral Reef			

Sub-Benthic Component

Surface Layer Class	Surface Layer Subclass	Soil Layer Suborder	Great Group
Rock Substrate	Bedrock, Pavement	Wassents	Frassiwassents, Sulfiwassents, Psammowassents, Fluviwassents, Hydrowassents, Heplowassents
Unconsolidated Substrate	Shells/Corals, Fragments, Sands, Mixes, Silts, Clays	Wassists	Frassiwassists, Sulfiwassists, Haplowassists

GeoForm Component

Coastal Region	Physiographic Setting	Geoform (Natural)	Subform	Geoform (Anthropogenic)
e.g. Atlantic Coastal Plain, New England Seaboard Lowland	Fracture Zone, Mid-Ocean Ridge, Abyssal Plain, Plateau, Continental or Island Rise and Slope, Shelf Break, Shelf, Basin Floor, Coast, Inland Sea, Trench	Coastal - e.g. Beach, Inlet, Tidepool, Atoll Marine – e.g. Guyot, Basin, Seamount, Vent	e.g. Face, Wall, Mouth, Head, Base	e.g. Jetty, Pilings, Trawl Disturbance, Levee, Pier