

Pollution Effects

Biology

The main pollutant types and the mechanism of harm for each.

Eutrophication, from fertiliser to fish kill.

1

Nutrient runoff

Nitrate and phosphate enter the water.

2

Algal bloom

Rapid growth at the surface.

3

Light blocked

Submerged plants die.

4

Decomposers proliferate

Feeding on the dead material.

5

Oxygen depleted

Aerobic decomposition consumes dissolved oxygen.

6

Fish and invertebrates die

The water becomes anoxic.

OTHER POLLUTANTS

Bioaccumulation — builds up in an organism

Biomagnification — concentrates up the food chain

Acid rain — leaches nutrients, mobilises aluminium

Microplastics — ingestion and transport

Biomagnification is why top predators carry the highest pollutant burdens: DDT and mercury both concentrate this way.