

Coastal ecosystem preservation

Introduction

Some of the themes included relate to the different types ecosystems their importance and preservation, Biodiversity, Food chain or Food

web, Importance of the ecosystem and. Sustainability

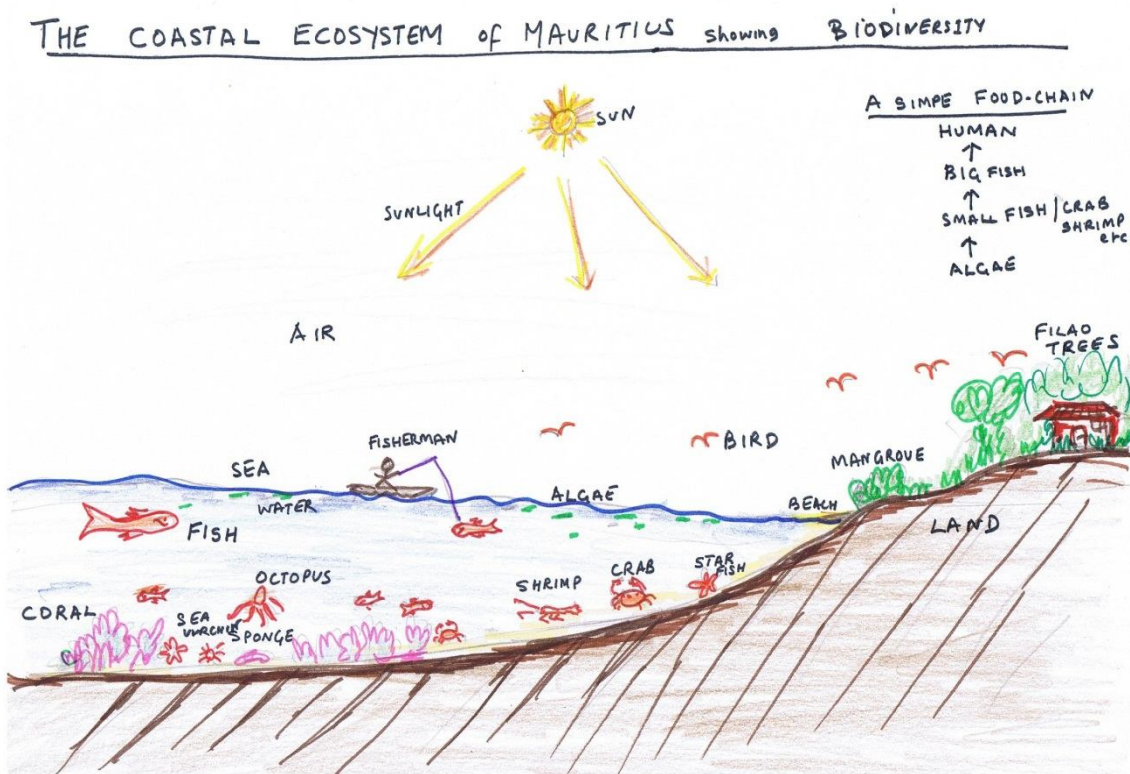
What is an ecosystem?

The plants and animals that are found in a particular environment are referred to as an ecosystem. These plants and animals depend on each other for food, shelter and growth .They are said to be interrelated.

Some example of ecosystems: coastal, marine, mountain, rivers, wetland. Each of these has particular species of plants and animals that are interrelated for their own survival.

An example of coastal ecosystem in Mauritius

A cross- section showing a typical coastal ecosystem is sketched on the board.



The names the various species of plants and animals (biodiversity) that make up the ecosystem as a whole could be identified. An

example of a simple food-chain is given in the picture.

Threats to coastal ecosystem

Pollution

Through dumping of man-made trash and waste from nearby settlements.

Agricultural run-off containing herbicide, pesticides

Global warming

Global warming is caused by too many gases thrown into the atmosphere by vehicles and

through other human activities.

Importance of the coastal ecosystem

- A source of food (e.g fish, octopus, shrimps, crabs etc.). Coral reefs and mangroves are shelters for a variety of fish; they act as a nursery and protect smaller species. They also protect the coast from storm waves and erosion.
- Livelihood to fishermen and also those in the tourist industry
- Recreational and leisure activities (swimming, fishing, picnic)

Sustaining the coastal ecosystem in good health

Each year, the 22nd of May is declared as the **International Day for Biodiversity** and 5th of June, as the **World Environmental Day**. These days are celebrated to stimulate our awareness on various Environmental issues and to reflect on our role in protecting our planet.

On a holistic point of view, human beings also form part of the ecosystem. They derive sources of income for their livelihood, others benefit from the recreational activities the ecosystem provides. Therefore, it is our responsibility to keep our ecosystem in good health. We could

reduce the harm done to our coastal ecosystem by:

- Not throwing garbage (plastic bottles, bags) or waste water in it.
- Planting trees e.g. fruit trees in our garden, trees help to absorb gases from the atmosphere and reduce global warming.
- Not picking corals or destroying mangroves. They are the 'lungs' of our coastal ecosystem.
- Avoid catching very small fish or other small marine animals. They are vital in the food chain.

Quiz

1. The plants and animals that are found in a particular environment are referred to as an ecosystem (True or False)
2. List the possible types of plants and animals that may live within a river ecosystem.
3. The variety and forms of plants and animals in an ecosystem are referred to as a biodiversity. (True or False).
4. Give an example of a food-chain.
5. It is important to preserve our coastal ecosystem because:
 - (i) It provides us with fish, octopus, shrimps and crabs (True or False)
 - (ii) Coral reefs and mangroves do not protect other animals. (True or False)
 - (ii) Provides a source of livelihood to fishermen (True or False)
6. It is our responsibility to preserve the coastal ecosystem by :
 - (i) Not throwing waste in the sea (True or false)
 - (ii) Cutting down mangrove plants and destroying coral reefs (True or False)