Buffer Encyclopedia Article

Buffer

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A term in **environmental chemistry** that refers to the capacity of a system to resist chemical change. Most often it is used in reference to the ability to resist change in **pH**. A system that is strongly pH buffered will undergo less change in pH with the addition of an **acid** or a **base** than a less well buffered system. A well buffered lake contains higher concentrations of bicarbonate ions that react with added acid. This kind of lake resists change in pH better than a poorly buffered lake. A highly buffered **soil** contains an abundance of **ion exchange** sites on **clay minerals** and organic matter that react with added acid to inhibit pH reduction.

See Also

Acid and Base