Eh Encyclopedia Article

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A measure of the oxidation/reduction status of a natural water, **sediment** or **soil**. It is a relative electrical potential, measured with a potentiometer (e.g., a **pH** meter adjusted to read in volts) using an inert platinum electrode and a reference electrode (calomel or silver/silver chloride). E_H is reported in volts or millivolts, and is referenced to the potential for the oxidation of **hydrogen** gas to hydrogen ions (H^+). This electron transfer reaction is assigned a potential of zero on the relative potential scale. The oxidation and reduction reactions in natural systems are pH dependent and the interpretation of E_H values requires a knowledge of the pH. At pH 7, the E_H in water in equilibrium with the oxygen in air is +0.76v. The lowest possible potential is 0.4v when oxygen and other electron acceptors are depleted and **methane**, **carbon dioxide**, and hydrogen gas are produced by the decay of organic matter.

See Also

Electron Acceptor and Donor