

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: The Biosphere

The biosphere comprises the various regions near the earth's surface that contain and are dynamically affected by the metabolic activity of the approximately 1.5 million animal species and 0.5 million plant species that are presently known and are still being discovered at a rate of about 10,000 per year. The biosphere is the youngest of the dynamical systems of the earth, having had its genesis about 2 billion years ago. It is also the one that has most profoundly affected the other major environmental systems, particularly the atmosphere and the hydrosphere.

[4.1: Chemistry and Energetics of the Life Process](#)

[4.2: Biogeochemical Evolution](#)

[4.3: Gaia - Bioregulation of the Environment](#)

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