

Major stocks of water on earth (thousand cubic kilometres)

Saltwater stocks	Volume (1000 km ³)	Percentage of total water	Percentage of total fresh water
Oceans	1 338 000	96.54	
Saline/brackish groundwater	12 870	0.93	
Saltwater lakes	85	0.006	
Total salt water stocks	1 350 955	97.476	
Freshwater stocks			
Glaciers, permanent snowcover	24 064	1.74	68.7
Fresh groundwater	10 530	0.76	30.06
Ground ice, permafrost	300	0.022	0.86
Total frozen and underground freshwater stocks	34 894	2.522	99.62
Freshwater lakes	91	0.007	0.26
Soil moisture	16.5	0.001	0.05
Atmospheric water vapour	12.9	0.001	0.04
Marshes, wetlands*	11.5	0.001	0.03
Rivers	2.12	0.0002	0.006
Incorporated in biota*	1.12	0.0001	0.003
Total not frozen or underground freshwater stocks	135	0.0103	0.389
Total freshwater stocks	35 029	2.5323	100
TOTAL WATER ON EARTH (1000 km³)	1 385 984	100	

Source:
Adapted from
Peter H. Gleick,
The World's Water
2000-2001,
Washington, D.C.
Island Press, 2000.

Note:
Totals may not
add due to rounding

*Marshes, wetlands
and water
incorporated in
biota are often
mixed salt and
fresh water.

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TABLE 1
COMPOSITION OF THE HYDROSPHERE

	Volume (in thousand cubic kilometres)	Per cent of total volume
World ocean	1,370,323	93.93
Underground water, total	60,000	4.12
of which groundwater in zones of active exchange	4,000	0.27
Glaciers	24,000	1.65
Lakes	230	0.016
Soil moisture	83	0.005
Atmospheric vapour	14	0.001
Rivers	1.2	0.0001
Total	1,454,651	100

TABLE 11
RATES OF WATER EXCHANGE

Section of hydrosphere	Years needed for complete renewal*
World ocean	3,000
Groundwater, total	(5,000)
of which zones of more active exchange	(330)
Polar glaciers	8,300
Soil moisture	1.0
Rivers and lakes	10
Rivers	0.033
Vapour in the atmosphere	0.027

* In round figures; the bracketed figures are highly approximate.