

Denitrification ($\text{NO}_3^- \rightarrow \text{NO} \rightarrow \text{N}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{N}_2$)

- conversion of NO_3^-
 - to gaseous forms (NO , N_2O , N_2)
- done by denitrifying bacteria with diverse physiology (primarily heterotrophs, but also chemoautotrophs, others)
 - if O_2 is around they use it as an e- acceptor
 - if anaerobic, they use NO_3^-
 - as an e- acceptor
 - C and energy comes from organic matter