

Ecology

The study of the interactions of living organisms with one another and with their environment.

Biotic

Describes the living factors in an environment (ex: plants, animals, fungi, bacteria).

Abiotic

Describes the nonliving parts of an environment (ex: water, rocks, light, temperature, etc).

What are the five levels of environmental organization?

1. Organism
2. Population
3. Community
4. Ecosystem
5. Biosphere

Organism

One individual living thing (ex: one alligator).

Population

A group of organisms of the same species that live together (ex: a group of alligators).

Community

Consists of all of the populations of species that live and interact in an area (ex: alligators, fish, trees, and turtles in a swamp).

Ecosystem

A community of organisms and the abiotic environment of the community. (ex: alligators, fish, trees, turtles, rocks, water, temperature, etc).

Biosphere

The part of Earth where life exists.

Producer

(Autotroph) An organism that is able to make its own food.

Consumer

(Heterotroph)
An organism that eats other organisms.

Herbivore

A consumer that eats only plants (ex: grasshoppers, prairie dogs, etc).

Carnivore

An organisms that eats animals (Ex: lion, hawks, etc).

Omnivore

An organism that eats both plants and animals (Ex: mice, blue jays, etc).

Scavenger

Omnivores that eat dead plants and animals (Ex: vultures, crows, etc).

Decomposer

Organisms that get energy by externally breaking down dead organism (Ex: bacteria and fungi).

Food Chain

A diagram that shows how energy in food flows from one organism to another.

Food Web

A diagram that shows ALL feeding relationships between organisms in an ecosystem.

Energy Pyramid

A triangular diagram that shows an ecosystem's loss of energy.

Limiting Factor

A resource that is so scarce that it limits the size of a population.

Carrying Capacity

The largest population an environment can support.

Competition

When two or more organisms try to use the same resource.

Predator

An organism that is killed and eaten by another organism.

Prey

An organism that kills and eats all or part of another organism.

Adaptation

A characteristic that improves an individual's ability to survive and reproduce in a particular environment.

Symbiosis

A close, long-term relationship between two or more species.

Mutualism

A relationship between two species in which both species benefit.

Commensalism

A relationship between two organisms in which one organism benefits and the other is unaffected.

Parasitism

A relationship between two species in which one species, the parasite, benefits from the other species, the host, which is harmed.

Coevolution

A long-term change takes place in two species because of their close interactions with one another.

