

## Ecosystems Vocabulary

Vocabulary Term	Meaning/Definition
<b>abiotic factors</b>	nonliving parts of an ecosystem (sunlight, soil, temperature)
<b>aquatic ecosystem</b>	includes freshwater areas, estuaries, marine areas
<b>bacteria</b>	helps in the natural recycling process, a decomposer
<b>balance</b>	equilibrium in an ecosystem
<b>biome</b>	complex ecological community, extends over a large geographic area , consists of many ecosystems
<b>biotic factors</b>	living components of an ecosystem (the organisms)
<b>carnivores</b>	consumer that eats meat
<b>co-exist</b>	living in the same environment
<b>community</b>	interaction of all living things in an area
<b>condensation</b>	change of a vapor of gas into a liquid (i.e. condensation on a glass of lemonade in the summer)
<b>conservation</b>	sensible use of the earth's resources to avoid harming the environment
<b>consumers</b>	living things that eat food (i.e. animals) types of consumers: herbivore, carnivore, omnivore
<b>control</b>	part of an experiment that does not change, serves as the standard to compare other observations
<b>deciduous</b>	trees lose leaves in autumn/fall
<b>decomposers</b>	recycles matter and energy (examples from model ecosystem: aquarium snail, isopod), keeps the community clean by eating the dead organisms
<b>decomposition</b>	the breaking down of an organism back into nature
<b>degrade</b>	to make worse, harm
<b>desert</b>	little rain, extreme temperatures, drought resistant grass plants: sagebrush, cacti (adapted to conditions) animals: kangaroo rat, snakes, lizards, some birds, spiders, insects
<b>ecology</b>	study of the relationships between organisms and their environment
<b>ecosystem</b>	all living things in an area and their habitat (includes living and nonliving) abiotic factors + biotic factors = an ecosystem
<b>environment</b>	everything that surrounds an organism and influences it
<b>estuary</b>	where freshwater and salt water meet (coastal area)
<b>eutrophication</b>	increased nutrients in an ecosystem (i.e. too much fertilizer)
<b>food chain</b>	a picture that shows how each organism gets energy
<b>food web</b>	system of food chains
<b>freshwater ecosystems</b>	includes streams, rivers, lakes, marshes, swamps Salt levels are low, important nutrient to land plants and animals, supports a wide variety of plant and animal life
<b>fungi</b>	helps in the natural recycling process, a decomposer
<b>germinate</b>	the process of a seed beginning to sprout r beginning to grow into a plant
<b>grasslands</b>	also called savannas, rainfall is low or seasonal, dominant plant life is grass; other plants: buffalo grass, sunflower, goldenrods, clover large herbivores: bison, antelope, zebras, prairie dogs
<b>habitat</b>	physical place where an organism lives
<b>herbivores</b>	consumer that eats plants
<b>interdependence</b>	the relationship between plants and animals in an ecosystem
<b>isopods</b>	small animals with a segmented thorax, each part of the thorax has its own pair of legs
<b>marine ecosystems</b>	includes ocean areas and seas, high salt content, warmer, lots of sunlight

	near surface (examples: coral reefs, tide pools, beaches, ocean floor)
<b>niche</b>	position of an organism in a community of plants and animals
<b>nutrients</b>	substance required to nourish an organism
<b>omnivores</b>	consumers that eat both plants and animals
<b>organisms</b>	living things
<b>pH</b>	measured on a scale of 0-14, where 7 is neutral (distilled water), 0-6 includes acid (orange juice), 7-14 includes basic (fertilizer, ammonia)
<b>photosynthesis</b>	chemical process where plants make their own food
<b>pollutant</b>	substance with damaging effects on the environment (i.e. acid rain, over-fertilization, road salt)
<b>pollution</b>	putting harmful things into the environment
<b>population</b>	a group of the same type of organism living in an area
<b>precipitation</b>	Liquid and solid forms of water from the atmosphere (examples: rain, snow, sleet, hail, drizzle, dew)
<b>predator</b>	an animal that eats another animal for food
<b>prey</b>	the animal that gets eaten
<b>primary consumers</b>	use plants for energy (anything that eats plants) examples: insects, fish, lizards, mice, birds, deer
<b>producers</b>	makes own food, gets energy from the Sun, example: plants
<b>recycle</b>	reusing materials
<b>scavenger</b>	feeds on dead organic matter that could have been killed by a predator
<b>secondary consumers</b>	get energy from primary consumers
<b>taiga</b>	located in parts of Canada, Europe and Asia; has evergreen <i>coniferous</i> forests (trees with cones), soil is acidic and difficult for plants to grow, ground covered in snow most of year, animals grow thick fur animals: moose, deer, mice, porcupines, snowshoe hares
<b>temperate forest</b>	the biome where we live, deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves), medium rainfall, foliage changes color in autumn (fall) trees: redbud, oak, maple, pine, dogwood, pine animals: squirrels, deer, foxes, bears
<b>terrestrial</b>	land
<b>tertiary consumers</b>	get their energy from secondary consumers
<b>toxin</b>	poison produced by a living organism
<b>tropical rain forest</b>	abundant rainfall, very humid, trees have dense canopies, floor does not get much sunlight, many species of animals and plants plants: vines, ferns, orchids, large and small trees animals: orangutans, insects, sloths, jaguars
<b>tundra</b>	treeless biome, below the soil is a thin layer of permafrost (permanently frozen ground), located near the northernmost part of earth, summer temperatures are around freezing, grasses and small trees are present, mosses and lichens grow well animals: reindeer, caribou, polar bears, arctic wolves, ptarmigans
<b>variable</b>	something in an experiment that can be changed
<b>water cycle</b>	evaporation, condensation, precipitation; continual process