

ECOLOGY VOCABULARY

Ecology- the study of how living organisms interact with each other and their environment.

Biotic- living factors in the environment (plants, animals)

Abiotic-nonliving parts of the environment (water, air, temperature, soil, etc)

Organism-a single living thing (plant, animal, bacterium, protist, or fungus)

Population-group of the same species living in the same area

Community- all populations that live in the same area and interact with each other

Ecosystem- a community of organisms and their environment

Biosphere- all ecosystems on earth

Niche- the job of an organism

Producers- organisms that use sunlight to make food (plants)

Consumers- organisms that eat other organisms

Herbivore- eats only plants (consumer)

Carnivore- eats only animals (consumer)

Omnivore- eats plants and animals (consumer)

Scavenger- eats dead organisms (consumer)

Decomposers- get energy by breaking down dead organisms

Bacteria-tiny one celled decomposer

Fungi-multicellular decomposer (Molds, mildews. yeasts. mushrooms, and puffballs)

Food chain- diagram of energy flow from one organism to another (simple)

Food web- diagram showing feeding relationships in an ecosystem

Energy pyramid- diagram that shows energy loss in an environment

Limiting factors- a resource that is so scarce that it limits the size of a population
[food, water in a desert, space]

Carrying capacity- the largest population that an environment can support

Competition- when 2 or more organisms try to use the same resource.

Predator-the eater (carnivore)

Prey-the victim

Symbiosis- a close long term association between 2 or more species

Mutualism- both organisms benefit (good)

Commensalism- one organism benefits and the other is unaffected

Parasitism- one organism benefits and the other is harmed

Parasite-the invader

Host-the victim of the parasite

Evolution-the change in a species over time

Biodiversity-the great variety of life forms on the planet

Territory-the "property" of an organism

Natural balance-the idea that producers, consumers and decomposers live in an equal and harmonious state

Dependence- reliance on another organism for survival

Detrimental- bad effect

Beneficial- good effect