



## Ecology Vocabulary



**Ecology:** Study of interactions of living organisms with one another and with their physical environment

**Habitat:** place where a particular population of a species lives

**Community:** the many different species that live together in a habitat

**Ecosystem:** a community and all of the physical aspects of its habitat (soil, air, water)

**Biosphere** ecosystem comprising the entire earth and the living organisms that inhabit it

**Camouflage** device used for concealment

**Mimicry** close external resemblance of an organism to some different organism

**Population** assemblage of a specific type of organism living in a given area

**Population gurb** factors which restrict population

**Population growth** increase in the number of people who inhabit a territory

**Prairie** extensive slightly undulating tract of land

**Abiotic:** the physical aspects of a habitat

**Biotic:** the living organisms of a habitat

**Biodiversity:** number of species living within an ecosystem

**Pioneer Species:** the first organisms to live in a new habitat; usually small, fast growing plants

**Succession:** regular progression of species replacement

**Primary Succession:** succession that occurs where plants have not grown before (ex: volcanoes, receding glaciers)

**Secondary Succession:** succession that occurs in areas where there has been previous growth (ex: forest fires, forest clearings)

**Primary Productivity:** the rate at which organic material is produced by photosynthetic organisms in an ecosystem

**Autotroph:** Organisms that make their own food, producers

**Heterotroph:** Organisms that consume producers for food, consumers

**Producer:** organisms that first capture energy and that make their own food (plants)

**Consumer:** organisms that consume producers for food (animals)

**Trophic Level:** a specific level in an ecosystem based on the organism's source of energy

**Food Chain:** the path of energy through the trophic levels of an ecosystem

**Herbivores:** second trophic level, animals that eat plants or other primary producer

**Carnivores:** third trophic level, animals that eat herbivores

**Omnivores:** both herbivores and carnivores

**Detritivores:** obtain energy from organic waste and dead bodies, release nutrients back into environment (decomposers: worms, bacteria, fungi)

**Food Web:** a complicated, interconnected group of food chains

**Biomass:** the dry weight of tissue and other organic matter found in a specific ecosystem

**Predation:** the act of one organism feeding on another

**Symbiosis:** two or more species live together in a close, long-term association

**Parasitism:** one organism feeds on and usually lives on or in another, does not usually kill the host (ticks)

**Mutualism:** a symbiotic relationship in which both species benefit (ants and aphids)

**Commensalism:** one species benefits and the other is neither harmed nor helped

**Fundamental Niche:** the entire range of conditions an organism is potentially able to occupy

**Realized Niche:** the part of its fundamental niche that a species occupies

**Biome:** major biological community that occurs over a large area of land

**Introduced Species:** an organism that is not native to an area, but is brought there intentionally or unintentionally by humans

**Niche:** how and where an organism lives and the job it performs. This includes diet, activity, how it affects energy flow in systems. THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS HABITAT