

abiotic

the non-living features of an ecosystem i.e. temperature, humidity, buoyancy, soil type, topography

abundance

the number of organisms in a population

adaptation

a structural, behavioural or physiological characteristic of a organism that helps it survive or reproduce

aerobic

related to the presence of oxygen

allelopathy

the production by a plant of chemicals that are released into the soil to assist with competition against other plants

algae

simple plants, usually aquatic, containing chlorophyll but lacking true stems, roots, leaves and vascular tissue

aquatic

living or growing in water

autotroph

an organism that produces its own food from simple substances in the environment

bacteria

the simplest group of non-green organisms with a basic cell structure

biochemical

a chemical found in or associated with living things

biomass

the total weight of the living components (producers, consumers and decomposers) in an ecosystem at any moment

biotic

the living components of the biosphere

capture-mark-recapture

the method of estimating population size by capturing, marking them and then recapturing them later

carnivore

a flesh-eating organism

chlorophyll

the green pigment in plants associated with the capture of sunlight for use in photosynthesis

colonisation

to move into and inhabit an area not previously occupied by that species

commensalism

the relationship between organisms that live in close association with only one species receiving the benefit, while the other species is not harmed

community

the combined and interconnected populations of an environment

competition

the struggle amongst living things, between the same species and between others, over a common resource such as food or space

consumer

any organism that eats other organisms

contamination

to make harmful or  
useless because of the  
exposure to or the  
addition of substances

decomposer

an organism such as a  
bacterium or fungus that brings  
about the decay or breakdown  
of organic material into simpler  
substances

distribution

the area or areas  
where a living  
organism occurs

environment

all the factors that affect  
a living organism, abiotic  
and biotic

estimate

an approximation  
calculation

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fauna

animals of a given  
area or period

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