

FOSS Environments Module

Glossary

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adaptation any structure or behavior of an organism that allows it to survive in its environment (IG)

adult a fully grown organism (IG)

algae a large plantlike group of water organisms (SRB, IG)

amphibian an animal, such as a frog or spadefoot toad, that reproduces in water (SRB)

aquarium a tank for keeping live water plants and animals (IG)

aquatic referring to water (SRB)

aquatic environment referring to the two kinds of freshwater environments: standing-water (lakes, ponds, and vernal pools) and flowing-water (rivers, streams, and creeks) (IG)

bacteria microorganisms that act as decomposers (SRB)

behavior the actions of an animal in response to its environment (SRB, IG)

brine salty water (IG)

brine shrimp tiny animals related to crabs and lobsters. Brine shrimp are found in salt ponds and salt lakes (IG)

burrow a hole or tunnel dug by a small animal (SRB)

canopy the highest layer in a forest, where there is a lot of sunlight (SRB)

carnivore an animal that eats only animals (SRB, IG)

carrying capacity the greatest number of organisms that can be supported (carried) by an area without damaging it (IG)

climate the average or typical weather conditions in a region of the world (SRB)

community the plants and animals in an ecosystem (SRB)

compete to rely on or need the same resource as another organism (SRB)

competition a demand for resources, such as food, water, or space, by two or more organisms (IG)

complete metamorphosis the cycle of growth changes for an insect. The stages include egg, larva, pupa, and adult. (SRB)

concentration the amount of a substance, such as salt, in an amount of another substance, such as water (SRB, IG)

condition the factors of an environment, such as water, light, air, chemicals, and temperature (IG)

consumer an organism that cannot make its own food. Consumers eat other organisms. (SRB, IG)

controlled experiment a set of compared investigations in which one variable is manipulated by steps while all other variables are controlled or kept the same (IG)

crustacean a class of mostly aquatic animals with hard, flexible shells (SRB)

darkling beetle an adult mealworm (IG)

decomposer an organism that breaks down plant and animal material into simple chemicals (SRB, IG)

dominant plant a plant that covers more space or is larger than others and usually has a significant influence on other organisms in the area (IG)

dormant inactive or resting (SRB)

drought a long period of dry weather (IG)

ecologist a scientist who studies ecosystems (SRB)

ecosystem a community of organisms interacting with each other and with the nonliving environment (SRB, IG)

elodea a vascular plant often found in freshwater aquariums (IG)

endangered at risk of becoming extinct (SRB)

energy what allows organisms to grow and move (SRB, IG)

entomologist a biologist who studies insects (SRB)

environment everything that surrounds and influences an organism. Deserts, forests, and the ocean are environments. (SRB, IG)

environmental factor one part of the environment. An environmental factor can be nonliving, such as water, light, and temperature. It can be living, such as plants and animals. (SRB, IG)

evaporate to dry up and go into the air (SRB)

extinction a species that no longer exists (SRB)

fertile able to support growth and development (SRB)

fertilizer any natural or synthetic material used in soil to help plants grow (SRB)

food a form of chemical energy that organisms need to survive (SRB)

food chain a description of the feeding relationships between organisms in an environment (SRB, IG)

food web all of the connected and interacting food chains in an ecosystem. Arrows show the flow of matter and energy from one organism to another. (SRB, IG)

fossil any remains, trace, or imprint of animal or plant life preserved in Earth's crust (SRB)

freshwater environment a lake, pond, river, or stream (IG)

function an action that helps a plant or an animal survive (SRB, IG)

fungus (plural **fungi**) an organism that lacks chlorophyll and gets nutrients from dead or living organisms (SRB)

generation a group of organisms born and living at the same time (SRB)

habitat the natural environment of a plant or an animal (SRB)

herbicide a chemical used to kill plants (SRB)

herbivore an animal that eats only plants or algae (SRB, IG)

home range a well-established territory that animals forage for food in year after year (IG)

inference the meaning that you make from your observations (IG)

inherited trait a characteristic that is passed down from generation to generation (SRB, IG)

insect an animal that has six legs, a head, a thorax, and an abdomen (SRB)

interact to act upon one another (SRB)

interaction how living and nonliving components act together in an ecosystem (IG)

irrigate to water crops by artificial means (IG)

isopod a small crustacean with 14 legs that all function the same (SRB, IG)

kelp forest ecosystem that is home to thousands of different kinds of organisms where kelp seaweed is a main producer (IG)

larva (plural **larvae**) the wormlike early stage in the life cycle of an insect (SRB, IG)

life cycle the stages in the life of a plant or animal (IG)

living the condition of being alive (SRB, IG)

marine a type of ocean ecosystem, like a kelp forest (IG)

matter anything that has mass and takes up space (SRB)

mealworm a darkling beetle larva (IG)

microorganism a microscopic organism, such as bacteria and some algae (SRB, IG)

migrate when animals move from place to place with a change in the weather (SRB, IG)

molt the process of shedding skin to make room for growing (IG)

nocturnal active at night (SRB)

nonliving referring to something that has never been alive or to things that were once alive and are no longer alive (SRB, IG)

nutrient a material needed by a living organism to help it grow and develop (SRB)

observation information obtained through your senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste) (IG)

omnivore an animal that eats both plants and animals (SRB, IG)

optimum most favorable to growth, development, and reproduction of an organism (SRB, IG)

organism any living thing (SRB, IG)

parasite an organism that lives on and gets nutrients from another living organism (SRB)

pesticide a chemical developed to kill animals that are in some way harmful to humans (SRB)

petroleum an oil that comes from the earth (SRB)

photosynthesis a process used by plants and algae to make sugar (food) out of light, carbon dioxide, and water (SRB)

phytoplankton microscopic plantlike organisms in aquatic environments that produce their own food (SRB, IG)

pill bug isopod that has a highly domed shape, short legs, and inconspicuous antennae (IG)

plant distribution how plants are spread out or arranged in an area related to environmental factors (IG)

pollination the moving of pollen to the female part of a flower (SRB)

pollute to make an environment unsuitable for organisms because of substances introduced into air, water, or soil (SRB)

population all organisms of one kind that are living together (IG)

predator an animal that hunts and catches other animals for food (SRB, IG)

preferred environment the set of environmental conditions that an organism appears to choose over other conditions (IG)

prey an animal eaten by another animal (SRB, IG)

producer an organism, such as a plant or algae, that makes its own food (SRB, IG)

pupa (plural **pupae**) the stage of an animal's life cycle between the larva and the adult stages (SRB, IG)

pupate to change into a pupa (IG)

range an amount of variation or difference (SRB)

range of tolerance the varying conditions of one environmental factor in which an organism can survive (SRB, IG)

recycle to use again (SRB)

reproduce to have offspring (SRB, IG)

salinity the concentration of salt in water (IG)

salt lake a body of water that contains a high concentration of salt (IG)

salt-sensitive unable to survive in salty environments (IG)

salt-tolerant able to survive in salty environments (IG)

scavenger an animal that eats dead organisms (SRB)

seed dispersal the movement of seeds away from the parent plant (SRB)

source the beginning of something, such as where a river starts (SRB)

sow bug isopod that is relatively flat with legs that extend a little beyond the edge of the shell and powerful antennae to sense its environment (IG)

species a group of organisms that are all the same kind (SRB)

stage the name for different points of insect development (IG)

structure any identifiable part of an organism (SRB, IG)

survive to remain living (IG)

temperature a measure of how hot or cold matter is (SRB)

terrarium a container with plants growing inside (SRB, IG)

terrestrial referring to land (SRB)

thrive to grow fast and stay healthy (SRB, IG)

tolerance the ability of an organism to survive under a given set of conditions (IG)

understory the layer above the rain forest floor and below the rain forest canopy (SRB)

variation difference (SRB, IG)

vernal pool a shallow, temporary pond (SRB)

viable alive and able to grow (IG)

zooplankton microscopic animals in aquatic environments (SRB, IG)