

# **Ecosystems: Organisms and Their Environment**

## **Vocabulary List**

The following words and terms used in the program may be unfamiliar to you. Try to listen for these terms while viewing the program, pay close attention so you can later include them in your scientific descriptions, observations, and creative writing assignment activities.

**Abiotic** - the non-living component of an ecosystem.

**Aquatic** - an environment of water.

**Autotrophs** - organisms that can produce their own food such plants and some microorganisms.

**Biodiversity** - diversity of living organisms.

**Biotic** - the living component of an ecosystem.

**Carbon cycle** - the recycling of carbon through the environment.

**Carnivores** - an animal that only feeds on animal tissue.

**Commensalisms** - when organisms co-operate for mutual survival.

**Community** - an ecosystem is said to be a community of organisms.

**Competitive exclusion** - in a competitive ecosystem a stronger or more efficient species will survive.

**Decomposers** - fungi and bacteria that eat dead and decaying organisms.

**Ecosystem** - a community of organisms.

**Fauna** - animals of a specific region.

**Flora** - plants of a specific region.

**Food web** - overlapping food chains of predators and prey.

**Global warming** - the build up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere traps heat and is warming the globe.

**Greenhouse Effect** - the trapping of carbon dioxide resulting in global warming is called the Greenhouse Effect.

**Herbivores** - plant eaters.

**Heterotrophes** - organisms that cannot produce their own food and consume autotrophs.

**Invertebrates** - a variety of species without backbones.

**Niche** - every species must have the food necessary for its survival and reproduce its young; this is called its niche.

**Nitrogen cycle** - the recycling of nitrogen through the environment.

**Parasitism** - when organisms live on another and get their nourishment from the host.

**Phosphorus cycle** - the recycling of phosphorus through the environment.

**Photosynthesis** - a process carried out by green plants in which carbon dioxide, water, and sunlight are converted into ATP and glucose, releasing oxygen as a by-product.

**Predation** - a term used to describe the relationship between organisms that eat other organisms.

**Primary consumers** - the primary level of consumers that eat organisms that can create their own food, such as plants.

**Regeneration** - change and re-growth in an ecosystem.

**Secondary consumers** - the secondary level of consumers, such as carnivores, that eat herbivores.

**Trophic levels** - different feeding levels in an ecosystem.