

# Changes in Ecosystems

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# Glossary

**acid rain** (AS-id RAYN) a type of rain that forms when chemicals from air pollution combine with water vapor in the air **(15)**

**adaptation** (ad-ap-TAY-shuhn) a body part or behavior that helps an organism survive in its environment **(19)**

**climate** (KLYE-mit) the average weather conditions of an area or region over a period of many years **(4)**

**community** (kuh-MYOO-nuh-tee) all the different populations of organisms living together in one area **(5)**

**competition** (kom-puh-TISH-uhn) the struggle among living things that share the same resources such as sources of food, water, or shelter **(7)**

**conservation** (kon-sur-VAY-shuhn) the wise use of natural resources **(22)**

**ecosystem** (EE-koh-sis-tuhm) all the living and nonliving things in one area and all their interactions; examples are grassland, desert, rain forest, and freshwater ecosystems **(4)**

**endangered** (en-DAYN-jurd) when a species is at risk of becoming extinct **(19)**

**environment** (en-VYE-ruhn-muhnt) all the physical things and conditions, such as soil, air, climate, plants, and animals, that surround a living thing **(6)**

**extinct** (ik-STINKT) when a species has died out and there are no longer any of its kind alive on Earth **(19)**

**fossil** (FOS-uhl) the preserved remains or traces of a once-living thing **(19)**

**habitat** (HAB-i-tat) the area in nature that is home to a living thing **(4)**

**niche** (NICH) the role of a living thing in its habitat; includes where an organism lives, what it eats or takes in from its surroundings, and how it affects the other living and nonliving things in its habitat **(5)**

**organism** (OR-guh-niz-uhm) a living thing such as a plant or an animal **(4)**

**pollution** (puh-LOO-shuhn) the act of putting harmful materials into the air, soil, or water **(14)**

**population** (pop-yuh-LAY-shuhn) all the members of one species living in an area **(5)**

**species** (SPEE-sheez) a group composed of all the living things of the same type; burrowing owls and great horned owls are two different species of birds **(5)**

**succession** (suhk-SESH-uhn) a gradual change in the kinds of organisms living in an ecosystem **(18)**