

# Changes in Ecosystems

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# Glossary

**acid rain** (AS-id RAYN) a kind of rain that forms when chemicals from air pollution mix 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 in an area over many years (4)

**community** (kuh-MYOO-nuh-tee) all the different populations of organisms living together in one place (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 place and all their interactions; examples are grassland, desert, rain forest, and freshwater ecosystems (4)

**endangered** (en-DAYN-jurd) when a species is close to 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 place 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 a place (5)

**species** (SPEE-sheez) a group made up of all the living things of the same kind; 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)