

aquatic ecosystems	ecosystems of marine and freshwater environments
biological diversity	the variety of life, encompassing the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, their genes and the ecosystems of which they form a part
biomass	the total weight of living things in a given area
biomes	very large ecosystems made up of specific vegetation types and their associated fauna
biosphere	the surface zone of the earth and its adjacent atmosphere, in which all organic life exists

climax community	the end product of succession; a community that is in equilibrium with its environment
disclimax	the community that results when a climax community becomes modified or displaced
ecology	the study of the interactions of living organisms with each other, and with their habitats and environments
ecosystem	the community of species and their non-living habitat
fauna	the animal life of an area or region

flora

the plant life of an area or region

genetic diversity

the inherited variation that occurs within populations of species as a result of different genes or biological combinations

habitat

the place where a particular plant or animal lives

megafauna

large mammals and birds such as those thought to have occupied Australia up to 10 000 to 30 000 years ago

natural vegetation

plants originally found in an area

niche

the position and function of a plant or animal in its community

photosynthesis

the process by which plants collect energy from the sun and use it to combine carbon dioxide with water to produce organic nutrients

primary succession

the sequential development of more complex plant communities

prisere

a complete chain of successive seres beginning with a pioneer community and ending with a climax community

secondary succession

the development of a disclimax community once an original community has been removed or destroyed

sere

a stage in the sequence of events in which a plant or animal community in an area develops over a period of time

species

a group of closely allied plant or animal types that can reproduce with each other

species diversity

the number of different species or species richness

succession

natural changes in the structure and species composition of a community over time

symbiotic relationship

mutually beneficial relationships that develop between species

terrestrial
ecosystems

communities of plants
and animals spread
broadly over the surface
of the continents
