

Edexcel IAL Geography

Biodiversity Under Threat Glossary of Definitions



Afforestation - Planting trees and vegetation in the aim of increasing forest cover.

Biodiversity Hotspot - An area of extremely high species diversity that are valuable to the global system

Biome - A region of land, often large in size, categorised by its climate and conditions

Carnivore - A species whose diet is predominantly meat.

CITES Biodiversity Action Plan - An international agreement to protect species being traded for scientific or economic gain.

Debt-for-Nature Swaps - Indebted countries have some of their debts written off in return for protecting their local ecosystems.

Deciduous - Vegetation that loses their leaves annually.

Decomposition - The process of breaking down complex organic compounds from a dead organism into simple compounds back into the soil.

Deforestation - The loss of trees and vegetation from temperate forests and rainforests.

Desertification - The process through which fertile land loses water moisture, nutrients and becoming more eroded.

Ecosystem - The combination of the species and the physical environment they live within

Ecosystem Biodiversity - The number of ecosystems or habitats within an area

Endemism - The unique-ness of a species to a location.

Energy Flow - The cycle of energy through an ecosystem, travelling through a food chain.

Enhanced Greenhouse Effect - The build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, reducing the amount of solar radiation reflected into space.

Fauna - Animals found within an ecosystem.

Flora - Vegetation found within an ecosystem.

Food Chain - A series of consumption of species, starting with primary consumers.

Genetic Biodiversity - Variations within the genetics and DNA of a species.

Herbivore - A species whose diet consists of only plant-based material.

Inorganic Compound - Compounds sourced from the soil or natural gases from the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide or phosphate.

Kuznet's Curve - A theory describing the correlation between economic development and environmental degradation.



Legislation - Laws and government policies.

Non-Native Species - Species from other ecosystems that have been introduced to an ecosystem, often competing with native species.

Non-Perennial River - A river that flows seasonally, so doesn't have a water flow during the entire year.

Nutrient Cycle - The transport of minerals between the ecosystem and species, through consumption and decomposition.

Omnivore - A species whose diet consists of both plant and meat.

Organic Compound - Complex mineral compounds produced within organisms, such as carbohydrates or protein.

Photosynthesis - The process of converting carbon dioxide and water into glucose and oxygen. All plants and some organisms rely on this process to survive.

Primary Consumer - Species who consume primary producers, forming the second stage of a food chain.

Primary Producer - Species who produce their food through photosynthesis, and form the first stage of any food chain.

Secondary Consumer - Species who consume primary consumers and primary producers and form the third stage to a food chain.

Species Biodiversity - The variety in species within an area.

Sustainable Yield - The amount of a resource that can be consumed/harvested before it threatens the self-renewability of the resource.

Tertiary Consumer - Species that consume secondary and primary consumers, forming the fourth stage to a food chain.

Turning Point - The point of irreversible change or a change in attitudes.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves - Areas of similar biomes, covering several countries, that cooperate in the protection of their ecosystems.

Wildfire - Fire that spreads through woodland or grasslands.

