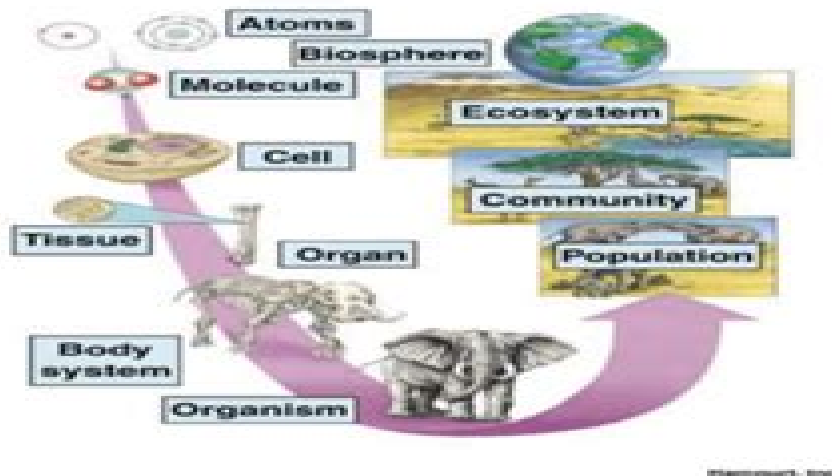


# Ecology: Study Guide

Raven/berg, Environment, 3/e



An **organism** is an individual.

A **population** is a group of individuals that live in the same area, can interbreed, and share the same gene pool.

A **community** is composed of all the different populations of species that live in a given area.

An **ecosystem** is a collection of all the organisms that live in a particular area along with their nonliving, physical environment.

- **Abiotic**— An ecosystem has a set of environmental or non-living factors that define what will live there. These are called abiotic factors. For example: water, temperature, light, air, soil type, topography.
- **Biotic**- anything that is living. For example, all plants and animals of an ecosystem.

A **biome** is a group of ecosystems that have similar climates and dominant communities.

A **biosphere** is a portion of Earth that contains all ecosystems.

## Niche

This is the role an organism plays in its habitat, not just where it lives, but how it functions in that community. Many similar species may share a habitat but no two species can occupy the same niche. When niches overlap competition will result. For example, rabbit and a deer may compete because they both are herbivores.

## Species interactions

**Symbiosis** – a relationship between 2 species that live in close association.

**Parasitism** – One organism feeds on another (the host). The host is usually harmed but not killed.  
Ex. Dogs and fleas.

**Mutualism** – Symbiotic relationship when both species benefit.

Ex. Cleaner fish removing parasites from large predator fish.

**Commensalism** – Two organisms live in close association with each other.

One organism is helped by the association while the other is neither helped nor harmed.

Ex. orchids and trees, birds nesting in trees.

## Predation

A predator feeds off other organisms but doesn't live on or in them, unlike parasites. Many predator/prey adaptations arose by co-evolution.

### Predator/Prey Dynamics

Predators affect the population size of their prey, but as the number of prey decreases so does the number of predators. The relationship is called a predator-prey cycle, and it shows how each regulates the population of the other in a natural setting. Problems can occur when populations are not controlled. This may be due to introducing a new species that has no natural predator. Some populations may also die off due to a lack of resources. Understanding population growth is important as each population impacts others within an ecosystem.



# Guide To The Study Of Soil Ecology

**SJ Ball**



## **Guide To The Study Of Soil Ecology:**

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