

Glossary

anole A common green or brown lizard. Anoles have a narrow head and a long tail. The body is covered with scales.

camouflage The shape, color, or pattern of an animal that helps it blend in with its surroundings. For example, brown crickets blend in with brown soil better than white crickets would. A white polar bear blends in with snow and ice better than a brown polar bear would.

carnivore An animal that catches and eats other live animals. Wolves, lions, many birds, and many insects are carnivores. Carnivores are usually at the end of food chains.

community Populations of different kinds of organisms that live in the same place at the same time. A pond community contains populations of fish, frogs, dragonflies, and water plants.

consumer An organism that gets energy by eating other organisms. All animals are consumers. They must take in food because they cannot make their own.

decomposer An organism that gets energy by feeding on dead organisms and wastes. Decomposers return nutrients to the environment when they break down dead material. Decomposers use sugars from dead material to get energy. They give off carbon dioxide in the process.

ecosystem All the living and nonliving things that interact with each other in an environment. A pond ecosystem has populations of plants and animals. It also has air, water, sunlight, mud, and other nonliving things.

food chain The path of food energy from one organism to another in an ecosystem. This is one example of a food chain:
plant → fish → bear

food web Overlapping food chains with different pathways for the flow of food energy in an ecosystem. Most animals in nature eat several kinds of food and are themselves food for more than one kind of predator.

fungus An organism that feeds on dead organisms or their wastes, cannot move on its own, and reproduces with spores. The plural of *fungus* is *fungi*. Fungi are made of hyphae, long thread-like structures that grow into the food material.

habitat The environment where an organism lives. An organism's habitat provides the food, shelter, water, and temperature needed for the organism's survival.

herbivore An animal that eats only plants or plant products. Herbivores are the second organism in a food chain. Cows, deer, horses, and many birds and insects are herbivores.

metamorphosis Change of body form that takes place during the life cycle of some animals. Insects go through either complete metamorphosis or incomplete metamorphosis. Complete metamorphosis has four stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Incomplete metamorphosis has three stages: egg, nymph, and adult.

microorganism An organism that cannot be seen without the aid of a microscope. Bacteria and some fungi are microorganisms.

nymph The immature form of an insect that is the second stage of incomplete metamorphosis. Nymphs look like small adults, but they have no wings or body parts for reproduction.

omnivore An animal that eats both plants and animals. Omnivores are usually in the middle or at the end of a food chain. Crickets, bears, and raccoons are omnivores.

Glossary (continued)

organism A living thing. Scientists group organisms according to their similarities and differences.

photosynthesis The process of using the energy in sunlight to make food from water and carbon dioxide. During photosynthesis, carbon dioxide and water react with energy in sunlight to make sugar and oxygen.

population All the organisms of the same kind that live in the same place at the same time. All the sunfish in a pond make up one population. All the catfish in the pond make up another population. Many different populations live together in the same ecosystem.

predator An animal that hunts, catches, and eats other live animals. Predators keep prey populations from getting too large.

prey An animal that is hunted, caught, and eaten by other animals. Predators depend on prey populations for food.

producer An organism that makes its own food. Plants and algae are producers. They use the energy in sunlight to make their own food from carbon dioxide and water. Producers are the source of matter and energy in most food chains.

starch A nutrient in plants that is used to store sugar made during photosynthesis. Starch is stored in the roots and stems of plants until it is needed by the plant.

yeast A single-celled fungus. Yeast remains dormant when it is dry. It begins to grow in a warm, moist environment. Yeast uses sugar for food.