

Levels of Ecological Organization

The levels of organization studied by ecologists are organisms, species, populations, communities, ecosystems, biomes and finally the biosphere.

- **Organism** - an individual living thing.
- **Species** - group of individuals that are closely related and can mate to produce fertile offspring.
(don't have to be in the same place)
- **Population** - all the members of the same species that live in the same place at the same time.
- **Community** - a group of various species that live in the same place and interact with each other.
- **Ecosystem** - a collection of all the organisms that live in a particular place together with their nonliving, or physical environment

- **biome** - a group of terrestrial communities that covers a large area and is characterized by certain soil and climate conditions and particular assemblages of plants and animals

Five Major Types of Biomes

Aquatic
Deserts
Forests
Grasslands
Tundra

- **biosphere** - contains the combined portions of the planet in which all life exists, including land, water, and air, or atmosphere.
- extends from about 8 km above Earth's surface to as far as 11 km below the surface of the ocean
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