

**Conservation:** The act of protecting nature – water, plants and wildlife.

**Creek / Stream:** A small, narrow river.

**Drainage Basin:** An area drained by a river system. A drainage basin acts like a funnel collecting all the water within the area covered by the basin and channeling it into a waterway. An example is the Great Lakes drainage basin.

**Ecology:** The study of the relationships between living organisms (plants, animals) and their environment.

**Ecosystem:** A collection of living things and the environment in which they live.

**Estuary:** A wide body of water formed where a large river meets the sea. Estuaries experience tidal flows and their water is a changing mixture of fresh and salt water.

**Fertilizer:** Any substance, such as manure or a mixture of chemicals, added to soil to increase its productivity.

**Fish:** One of a class of cold-blooded animals having scales that cover their body, and spend their life in the water.

**Food chain:** A series of organisms interrelated in their feeding habits, the smallest being fed upon by a larger one, which in turn feeds a still larger one, etc.

**Food web:** Interrelated food chains in an ecological community.

**Habitat:** A place that is natural for the life and growth of an organism.

**Herbicide:** A chemical substance or preparation for killing plants, especially weeds.

**Insecticide:** A chemical substance or preparation for killing insects and bugs.

**Invasive Species:** A non-native species that is so reproductively successful and aggressive that it can dominate an area often to the point of becoming a monoculture. It interferes with the natural functioning and diversity of the ecosystem where it becomes established.

**Lake:** A body of fresh or salt water of considerable size, surrounded by land and unconnected to the sea except by rivers or streams.

**Mollusk:** An invertebrate animal living in water and often having a soft body, protected by a hard outer shell. An example is a zebra mussel.

**Native Plant:** A plant that naturally grows in a given area or region.

**Naturalized Plant:** A non-native plant brought from another country that adapts to the new environment without affecting the native plants.

**Ocean:** The large body of salt water surrounding the continents or land masses, The Atlantic, Pacific, Indian and Arctic Oceans.

**Organism:** An individual form of life, such as a plant, an animal, or a fungus.

**Pesticide:** A chemical preparation used for destroying plant, fungal, or animal pests.

**Phosphate:** A major nutrient required for good crop nutrition and plant growth; it is highly reactive and quickly binds to other elements. It is also found in commonly used soaps. A large buildup of phosphates can remove the oxygen from natural bodies of water.

**Pollutant:** Any substance, such as chemicals or waste products, that makes the air, soil, or water harmful or unsuitable.

**Predator:** An organism that kills and consumes another organism (prey); includes animals eating other animals, and animals eating plants.

**Prey:** An organism that is killed and eaten by another organism.

**River:** A large natural stream of fresh water flowing along a specific course, entering into a larger body of water. For example the Humber River flows into Lake Ontario.

**Threatened Species:** A species of animal or plant that are likely to be endangered if factors threatening it are not changed or removed.

**Wetland:** A low-lying area of land that holds water naturally. Ponds, swamps, marshes, bogs and fens are examples of wetlands.

**Water cycle:** The process, involving evaporation and condensation, by which the Earth's water circulates through the environment.

**Watershed:** A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is on it or under it, drains into the same river, and eventually into a larger body of water, like a lake or ocean.