

BBB GLOSSARY

adaptation – a physical or behavioural feature of an organism that helps it survive in its habitat.

alien (species) – a species originating from elsewhere which is introduced into a locality.

antediluvian – made, evolved or developed a long time ago.

biodiversity (or biological diversity) – a term referring to the variety of life in an area, ranging from a drop of pond water to the whole biosphere. Biodiversity includes four main considerations: landscape diversity, ecosystem diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity. Biodiversity also involves the complex interactions between living things.

biogeoclimatic – the complex interaction of climate, terrain, soil, plants and animals. The term is used in mapping, resource classification and land use management.

biome – a geographic division based on plants, animals and a somewhat uniform climate.

biota – living things.

boreal – a climatic zone in which winters are snowy and summers are short.

Cambrian – the earliest geologic period of the Paleozoic era, lasting from approximately 600-410 million years ago.

canopy - the top layer of a forest.

classification – systematic arrangement in groups or categories, according to established standards.

climate – the average weather conditions over a period of time, defined by temperature, precipitation and wind velocities.

coniferous – refers to cone bearing trees. A coniferous forest may be made up of pines, firs, spruces, cedars, etc.

consumer – an organism that eats others for its food.

continental shelf – a shallow, gently sloping submarine plain bordering a continent, extending from the shore to

the top of a steep slope leading to the oceanic abyss.

deciduous – refers to the trees that annually shed their leaves. A deciduous forest may include birches, beeches, maples, oaks, etc.

decomposer – an organism (such as a worm, bacterium or fungus), which breaks down dead organic materials into inorganic materials. These can then be recycled as nutrients through an ecosystem.

delta – a deposit of sediment (e.g., island, sand bar, mudflat) at the mouth of a river emptying into the sea.

ecosystem – all the living and nonliving things in a given area that interact with one another; organisms or a natural community together with their physical, chemical and biological environment (e.g., a lake, stream, marsh, forest, desert, etc.).

ecosystem diversity – the variety of different natural systems (pond, forest, marsh, lake) found within a given area.

ecozone – defined by its climate, human activity, vegetation, soils, geology and physiographic features. The Yukon has 5 ecozones: Taiga Plains, Southern Arctic, Taiga Cordillera, Boreal Cordillera, and Pacific maritime. The Yukon's 5 ecozones can be further subdivided into 23 smaller ecoregions.

endangered – any species of plant or animal whose existence is threatened with immediate extinction through all or most of its range.

erosion – the removal of soil or rock by moving water, wind or ice.

estuary – an area where fresh water meets saltwater, such as the mouth of a river, a saltmarsh or a lagoon.

extinction – the condition of having been removed from existence. A plant or animal facing extinction is in danger of vanishing from our world.

fiord – a long, narrow arm of the sea with steep walls cut by glaciers.

food web – an interlocking pattern of food chains.

genetic diversity – refers to how each individual is different in some way from every other individual of its species.

habitat – the place or ‘home’ in the environment where an animal or plant lives, which provides all its essentials for life, including food, water, shelter and space.

hibernation – the act of passing the winter, or a portion of it, in a state of sleep or stupor.

index – a number that can be compared from year to year for a population. An example would be the ratio of young to adult deer in a herd. This can be compared from year to year to see if there are any changes.

inventory – a systematic list.

landform – a feature of the earth’s surface made by natural causes.

landscape diversity – variety of physical features of the land.

migratory (wildlife) – refers to animals which make annual migrations, traveling distances in seasonal movements.

montane – mid-elevations on mountain slopes.

native (species) – a species that originates in a particular place; not having been introduced from elsewhere.

niche – the role played by an organism in a biological community (such as producer, predator, prey, decomposer), as well as how the organism performs that function.

old-growth forest – the last stage in forest succession. In coastal B.C., old-growth forests range in age from 200 to over 1000 years. Old-growth forests are characterized by a large variety of tree sizes and ages, a great diversity in species of plants and animals, the presence of standing and fallen dead trees, and an uneven canopy which allows light to reach the forest floor in small openings.

organism – a living thing.

plateau – a large, level upland area, sometimes bounded by steep slopes.

population – the number of individuals of a particular species that live within a defined area.

predator – an animal that hunts and kills other animals.

prey – an animal that is killed and eaten by other animals.

producer – an organism that converts the sun’s energy into food.

rain shadow – the markedly drier (or lee) side of a mountain area.

resident (wildlife) – animals which live year round in a specific area, as opposed to migratory.

resource – a portion of an environment to which people have given value, or see as being available for use.

sample – a sample is a group of animals or plants that are part of a larger population. This sample should be similar to the whole population, i.e. with similar percentages of male, female, young and old individuals, so it can represent the whole population in scientific studies.

scientific name – a unique, two word name (binomial) given by scientists to each known plant and animal. Scientific names are based on Latin, they are always either written in italics or underlined, and the genus (the first of the two names) is always capitalized.

species – a population of individuals that are more or less alike and that are able to breed and produce fertile offspring under natural conditions.

species diversity – the variety of species of living things within a given area.

succession – the orderly, gradual and continuous replacement over time of one plant, animal or community by another.

taxa – an orderly grouping of organisms.

taxonomy – the orderly classification of plants and animals according to established standards.

trend – an indication of an overall change in the population of a species.

water cycle – the continuous circulation of water from the atmosphere to the earth and back to the atmosphere through condensation, precipitation, evaporation and transpiration.

wildlife tree – a standing dead or live tree with special characteristics that provide valuable habitat for the conservation or enhancement of wildlife.