



Vocabulary: Prairie Ecosystem



Vocabulary

- Carnivore – an organism that eats only animals.
 - Examples of carnivores in North America are wolves, coyotes, mountain lions, hawks, eagles, and snakes.
- Consumer – a creature that feeds on organic matter because it cannot produce it.
 - All animals, all fungi, and even a few plants are consumers.
 - A cow chewing grass, a person eating steak, and an earthworm digesting manure all represent consumers in action because in each case the animal is eating organic matter.
- Ecosystem – a community of living things along with their natural environment.
- Equilibrium – a state of balance and stability.
- Extinct – no longer in existence. (An organism is extinct if it has died out.)
- Food chain – a sequence of organisms in which each organism feeds on the one below.
 - Example: Grass → Cricket → Frog → Snake → Hawk.
In this food chain, crickets eat grass, frogs eat crickets, snakes eat frogs, and hawks eat snakes.
- Herbivore – an animal that eats plants.
 - Examples of herbivores in North America are deer, elk, bison, beavers, and crickets.
- Organism – a living thing.
- Population – all the organisms of a certain kind in a particular place.
- Prairie – a region of flat or gently hilly land that is dominated by grasses and has few or no trees.
 - The word “prairie” generally refers to an area of North America east of the Rocky Mountains.
- Producer – an organism that can convert simple inorganic matter (such as water and carbon dioxide) into organic matter (like sugar and protein).
 - Plants are producers because they use the energy of the Sun to create organic materials from carbon dioxide and water.

