

Glossary

Adaptation: 1) Characteristics of organisms evolved as a consequence of natural selection; 2) Changes in the form or behavior of an organism during life as a response to environmental stimuli; 3) Changes in the excitability of a sense organ as a result of continuous stimulation

Biogeography : The study of the geographical distribution of organisms; it largely depends on abiotic factors, resources, community interaction, mobility of organisms (whether large or small), topography, geo-historical factors (continental drift, island formation, etc.) e.g. small island hosts fewer species, fewer resources, fewer habitats than a larger one; the species on an island are balanced by the death- and immigration rate of organisms but is less stable compared to a larger island or even continent – applies for natural reserves as well (see ecology pattern and disturbance - space).

Biome: Large, ecological unit composed of similar types of climax communities on a global scale, arising as a result of complex interactions of climate, other physical factors, and biotic factors (e.g., rainforest, tundra, grassland....)

Macroclimate: Global climatic patterns.

Microclimate: The climate within a very small area or in a particular, often tightly defined habitat; e.g., temperature gradient a few mm above a leaf, or along a tree trunk, etc.).