

Environment vs. Ecosystem

A biophysical **environment** is a biotic and abiotic surrounding of an organism or population, and consequently includes the factors that have an influence in their survival, development, and evolution (Biology online). A biophysical environment can vary in scale from microscopic to global in extent. It can also be subdivided according to its attributes. Examples include the marine environment, the atmospheric environment, and the terrestrial environment (Kemp, 1998, p. 127). The number of biophysical environments is countless, given that each living organism has its own environment (Wikipedia, 2019).

The term *environment* can refer to a singular global environment in relation to humanity, or a local biophysical environment (e.g., the UK's Environment Agency) (Wikipedia, 2019). It may also refer to a natural environment, a social environment (e.g., the climate in a workplace), a human-made environment, a policy environment, an environmental movement, and so forth.

An **ecosystem** is a community of living organisms (plants, animals, and microbes) in conjunction with the nonliving components of their environment (things like air, water, and mineral soil), interacting as a system. These living organisms and nonliving components are regarded as linked together through nutrient cycles and energy flows. As ecosystems are defined by the network of interactions among organisms, and between organisms and their environment, they can come in any size but usually encompass specific, limited spaces. (Some scientists even say that the entire planet is an ecosystem.) (Quoted in Strichow, 2013, p. 14.)

References

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