

How Do Environmental Changes Affect Organisms?

Science Words

Say each word quietly to yourself. Then read the meaning.

Read the tip to help you remember.

environment [en•VY•ruhn•muhnt] all the living and nonliving things and conditions in nature

Environment and *everything* begin the same way. The *environment* is everything in nature.

ecosystem [EE•koh•sis•tuhm] a community of living things and the nonliving things around them

A system is a group of things that act together as a whole. The “things” in an *ecosystem* are the plants, animals, water, soil and other nonliving things and conditions in an environment.

pollution [puh•LOO•shuhn] any harmful substance that gets into the environment

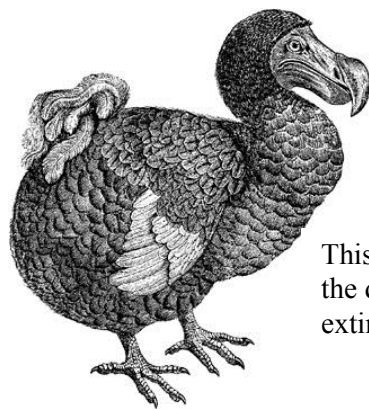
Pollution and *poison* begin with the same sound. *Pollution* poisons the environment by making it harmful to living things.

conservation [kahn•ser•VAY•shuhn] protecting ecosystems and the organisms living in them

Conservation and *care* begin with the same sound. *Conservation* is taking care of ecosystems.

extinction [ek•STINK•shuhn] when all the members of a certain kind of living thing die

Extinction and *extinguisher* begin the same way. A fire extinguisher can wipe out, or destroy, a fire. *Extinction* is when all members of a plant or animal are wiped out, or destroyed.



This is a drawing of the dodo bird, an extinct animal.

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Science Concepts

Read the Ideas more than once. Do your best to remember them.

1. Living things interact with one another and with nonliving things in the environment.
2. An ecosystem is a community of living things and the nonliving things and conditions around them.
3. Floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and droughts can change the environment quickly.
4. Animals, such as beavers building beaver dams, cause changes in the environment.
5. Human activities, such as habitat destruction, can be harmful to the environment.
6. Habitat destruction takes place when the trees in an area are cut down.
7. Pollution can kill living things and cause disease.
8. Conservation is when people work to protect the environment and the living things in it.
9. Some living things change because their environment changes.
10. Some dinosaurs became extinct, or died out, when the environment cooled.