

WEB VOCABULARY FOR STUDENTS

*Recommended before visit, but not necessary.
Information within parentheses is for older children.*

Energy Transfer: The sun provides energy to the earth. (Plants, **producers**, use sunlight in a process called **photosynthesis** to make their own food. Animals, **consumers**, receive energy by eating plants or other animals.)

Herbivores are animals that eat or consume only plants.

Omnivores are animals that eat or consume both plants and animals. Most people are omnivores.

Carnivores are animals that eat other animals.

Decomposers are microscopic organisms, fungi, and invertebrates such as worms, termites, and millipedes break down dead matter so it can be used by plants/Producers.

Predators are animals that hunt and eat other animals. (They often have good vision, a keen sense of smell, and excellent hearing. Owls, hawks, mountain lions, and bobcats have front-facing eyes and binocular vision that helps them better judge distance. **“Eyes in front...I can hunt.”** Their sharp claws or talons help them grip prey. They use sharp, curved beaks or canine teeth to “scissor-cut” food. Their forward-facing ears increase their hearing. Owls have dish-shaped faces that act as sound collectors.)

Prey are animals that are hunted and eaten by other animals. (They have large eyes on the sides of their head to give them wider views of their surroundings. This enables them to better detect predators in many directions without turning their head. **“Eyes on side...I will hide.”** Their ears are often large and swivel to detect sounds better; examples are rabbit, squirrel, and deer. Prey often use **camouflage** to disguise themselves. Their colors of tans and grays blend with grasses and shadows, making it more difficult to be seen.)

Balance of Nature is the interdependency between plants and animals that form the strands of the **Web of Life**. (Life has a tendency toward a balance of producer-consumer and predator-prey relationships. Drought years reduce plant growth, which then reduces rabbit and deer populations, which reduce bobcat, mountain lion, and coyote populations. Removing predators will increase rabbit and deer populations. Over-population of herbivores can lead to their starvation.

Nature, if undisturbed, will always move toward a balance of predator and prey as seasons and plant growth permit. Nature’s recovery from natural causes such as fire, flood, or hurricane begins immediately from the simplest organism to the final complete ecosystem.)