

NATURAL SYSTEMS

THE ORGANISATION OF LIFE

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What is biodiversity and how can it be measured?

What are the components of natural systems?

Can we predict changes in the natural world?

Ecology is the study of how the living world works. Over recent years, its scope has broadened to include topics from small-scale interactions among individual organisms to global patterns, much of which fall outside the traditional ecology syllabus. *Natural Systems: The Organisation of Life* is the first textbook to link ecology, biodiversity and biogeography in order to bridge the gap between conventional and modern ecology.

Organised into four sections on species, diversity, communities and biogeography, the text builds sequentially from the concept and importance of species to patterns of diversity, the interactions of natural systems with their abiotic environment and how species are organised within communities. This leads to consideration of global patterns of biogeography, concluding with the topic of islands, which are the closest we can get to sealed natural systems.

Taking a broad perspective on the organisation of the living world and developed using course feedback collated over six years, this textbook is aimed at undergraduate and graduate students of ecology, biodiversity, biogeography, environmental science and conservation. The coming years will be a time of great challenges in which ecologists have a crucial role to play. Learning how natural systems operate is the first step towards making a difference.



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