

Wisconsin Ecosystems: Living Things, Where They Live, & Their Survival Webs



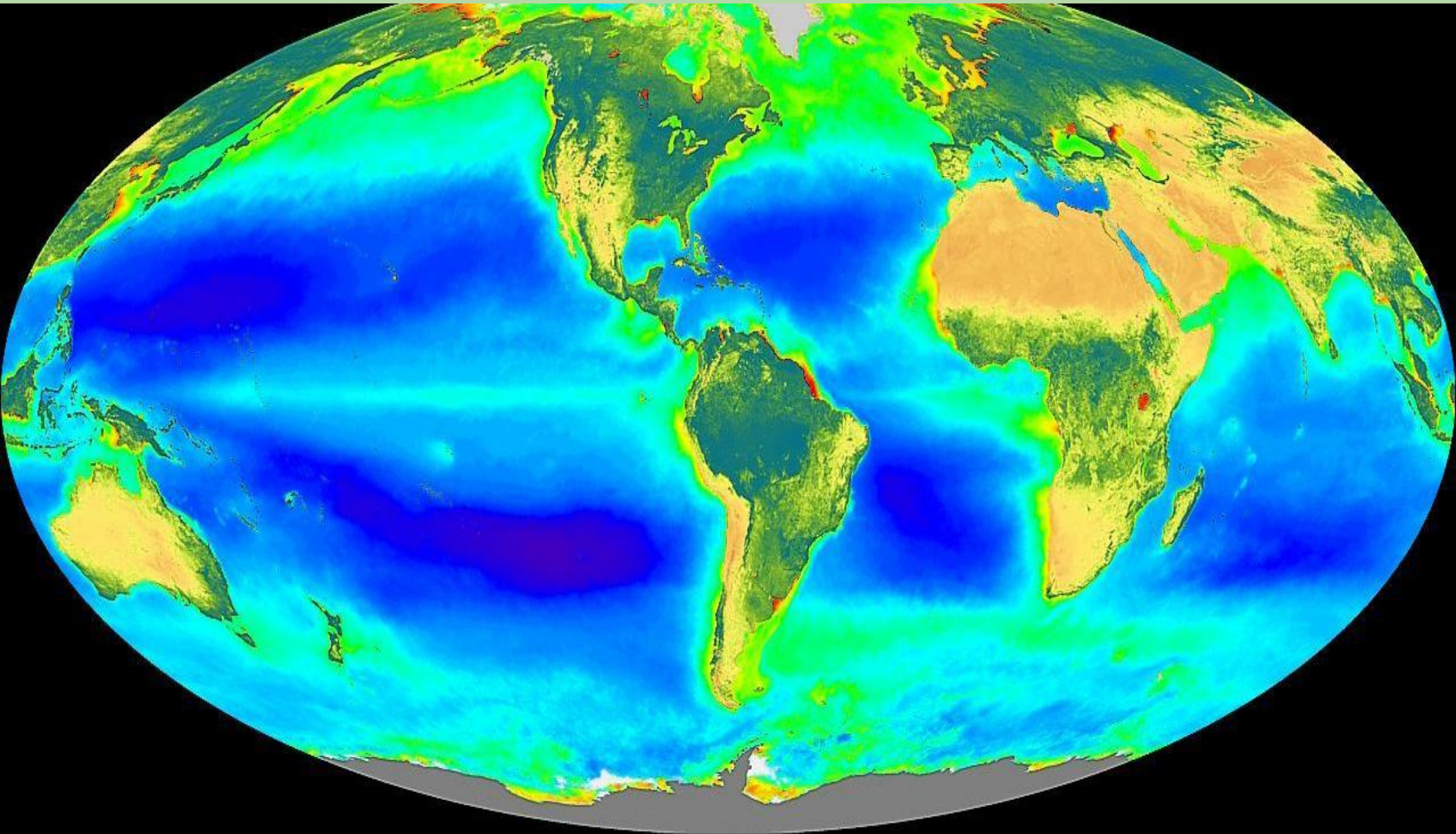
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What is an ecosystem?



An ecosystem is a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. So, all the living things in any type of environment and the environment itself.

What ecosystems do we have around us?



In Northern Wisconsin, our general ecosystems include: wetlands of many kinds, temperate forests (also of many kinds), prairie/grasslands, and urban.

What is a wetland?



A wetland is a place where the land is covered by water, either salt, fresh or somewhere in between. Marshes, bogs, and ponds, the edge of a lake or ocean, the delta at the mouth of a river, low-lying areas that frequently flood—all of these are wetlands.

What lives in a wetland?



Each of Wisconsin's wetland types have distinct characteristics and provide homes for certain plants and animals. Water-loving plants (like rushes, jewelweed, and marsh marigold) live in our wetlands. Wetlands are spawning grounds for game fish like pike and muskies; migration and breeding habitat for waterfowl, cranes, and songbirds; and year-round habitat for deer, otter, beaver, and mink. Turtles, frogs, salamanders, snakes, insects, and other animals also live in or use wetlands.

What is a temperate forest?



Temperate forests are those found in the moderate climates in both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere. They may also be called “four-season forests” because the climates harboring them tend to experience four distinct seasons.

What lives in a temperate forest?



Forests are more than just trees. They are a complex community of plants and animals that constantly change, grow, and interact with each other. The northern forests are dominated by maples, aspen, northern red oak, basswood, and red and white pine. We have wolves, coyotes, black bears, mountain lions (puma, cougar, whatever you want to call them), lynx, fox, beaver, otters, bats, various bird (woodpeckers, robins, cardinals, eagles, falcons, hawks, owls, etc).

What is a prairie?



A prairie is a large open area of grassland, especially in the Mississippi River valley.

What lives in a prairie?



Prairies are made up of mostly grasses, sedges (grass-like plants), and other flowering plants like lupine, coneflowers, milkweed, and little bluestem). The animals on the Wisconsin grasslands might include; prairie chickens, prairie ringneck snakes, bobolinks, yellow-faced bees, Karner Blue butterflies, and 13-lined ground squirrels.

What is an urban ecosystem?



An **urban ecosystem** is simply the community of plants, animals, and humans that inhabit the **urban** environment. It is an area framed by built structures like buildings, roads, sewers, and power lines.

What lives in an urban ecosystem?



Urban animal communities tend to be dominated by medium-size generalists, such as raccoons, coyotes, opossums, skunks, and foxes. Introduced groups include rodents, earthworms, shade trees, weeds, and insect pests.

What is a Food Web (or Survival Web)?

In an ecosystem, plants and animals all rely on each other to live. Scientists sometimes describe this dependence using a **food chain** or a **food web**.

