



Change in Ecosystems



Do Ecosystems Change Over Time?

Everything that lives in our world changes over time. Humans change. Our bodies change. Animals change. Plants change. Every living thing changes over time, including ecosystems. What an ecosystem looks like changes, and so does its composition. The **composition** of an ecosystem describes everything that is part of an ecosystem. This includes both living and non-living things, both biotic and abiotic things.

Look around you right now. Pick the first thing you see. Describe how it changes over time.



When an ecosystem changes over a long period of time, it is called **succession**. The populations in an ecosystem change during succession. A population may become smaller over time. A population may even disappear completely. A population may become much bigger. Something else may happen during succession. Species from ecosystems close by might come and move into the ecosystem. These are all changes that may happen to an ecosystem over time. They are all part of succession. An ecosystem might also change because of humans. For example, when we develop land for houses, we cut down trees. We change the environment for all plants and animals. Some animals can adapt to the change. Others can not. Their population is then affected.

