

Concord River Greenway: Science Glossary

- **Adaptation/adapt-** an ability used by an organism, which gives it an advantage; a body or structural component of an organism, which helps it to survive in its habitat. Example, a bird's wings are an adaptation, which help it to fly.
- **Anadromous-** Refers to fish that regularly migrate.
- **Aquatic-** Referring freshwater (no salt added).
- **Aves-** a class of vertebrates, otherwise known as "birds".
- **Benthic-** Refers to the bottom of a body of water.
- **Binocular vision-** forward facing eyes, as observed on raptors and common predatory birds. "*Eyes on the front, born to hunt.*"
- **Birder-** a person who enjoys bird watching.
- **Buoyant-** afloat; ability to float.
- **Camouflage-** the ability to blend with backgrounds, by appearing as the same color or landscape pattern. Remaining motionless (or slow moving) is also an excellent means of camouflage.
- **Carnivore-** An animal that eats other animals.
- **Confluence-** Where two rivers join.
- **Consumer-** An animal that eats food, such as anything produced by plants or other animals.
- **Cycles-** The circular motion of occurrences in nature, such as the recycling of carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen, which are used by plants and animals.
- **Decomposer-** Any of the following; the FBI, fungus, bacteria, invertebrates; those that eat dead things and recycle their nutrients, thus making those nutrients available to other organisms.
- **Detritus-** Decaying organic material, such as leaves, which are a food supply for invertebrates in particular.
- **Diurnal-** active during the day.
- **Drey-** A nest-like home made by a squirrel in trees.
- **Ecosystem-** a community of plants, animals, etc. in relation to their surroundings, often related to geography and climate. Sometimes also noted as a biome.
- **Ecotone-** Where two ecosystems come together, such as a forest and wetland.
- **Elusive-** Able to remain unseen.
- **Erosion-** When water or wind or other phenomena wash away sand, soil, and other organic materials.
- **Eutrophication-** The addition of nutrients; in excess; may be caused by excessive plant decomposition or by way of human culture.
- **Feather-** made of a protein called keratin. Feathers provide birds in general the ability to fly, insulate themselves, stay dry, display bright colors for status, and to camouflage for protection from predators.

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- **Food-** source of nutrients and energy consumed by living things, which allow organisms to grow and sustain life.
- **Habitat-** a natural home within an ecosystem; an ideal place to live due to the presence of appropriate sources of food, water, and shelter.
- **Herbivore-** An animal that eats plants.
- **Interrelationship-** The interactions and associations between plants and animals.
- **Invasive-** A non-native plant or animal that causes harm to native populations and may be detrimental to human health, water quality, economies, etc.
- **Metamorphosis-** A physical change, which insects undergo when they transition from young to adults.
- **Midden-** Material left behind by wildlife, such as shells of consumed mollusks or pine cone husks; natural or organic litter.
- **Monocular vision-** one eye on either side of the head, as observed on songbirds; common in prey species. *“Eyes on the side, born to hide.”*
- **Native-** A plant or animal, which exists within a range where they belong and have natural predators, consumers, or other forms of control keeping their populations balanced and in-check.
- **Natural resource-** A part of the earth, which may be used by people and wildlife; comes from nature.
- **Nest-** a shelter used specifically to protect bird eggs; used to protect bird eggs and young during breeding season; made of various materials.
- **Nocturnal-** Active at night.
- **Non-native-** A plant or animal found outside of its native range; found where it did not historical or naturally exist.
- **Omnivore-** An animal that eats both plants and animals.
- **Organism-** any living thing.
- **Photosynthesis-** A process a plant uses to create its own food, by capturing the energy of the sun and using nutrients from the air and soil.
- **Plumage-** a bird’s feathers.
- **Predator-** An animal that hunts and eats another animal; hunts prey.
- **Preen-** To clean and repair feathers using the beak.
- **Prey-** An animal that is hunted by another animal; hunted by predators.
- **Produce(r)-** Something edible to an animal; food that grows on a plant or is the plant, which may be eaten by animals (food produced by a plant).
- **Riparian (zone)-** associated with rivers, streams, brooks, etc.
- **Runoff-** Water that sheds from the land and reaches rivers and eventually the ocean. Contains rain and anything carried by the flow of rain heading downhill.
- **Scat-** A fancy word (scientific) for wild animal poop!

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- **Seed dispersal-** A method used by a plant to transport and deposit a seed to a new growing location.
- **Shelter-** protection from predators, weather elements, competition, etc.
- **Substrate-** The ground; soil; a surface, such as snow, sand, or mud, where wildlife tracks can be printed and suspended for observation.
- **Tree cavity-** A hole in a tree caused by animals or rot, often used as a home for wildlife; shelter.
- **Viable-** Alive and able to grow or sprout new life.
- **Water-** a resource essential to the survival of all living things; may serve hygienic purposes.
- **Wetland-** “Land” that is wet for all of or at least part of the year, such as a river or vernal pool.