Glossary

Avian – relating to birds
Abiotic factors – a term applied to non-living (physical, chemical, or non-organic) things in the environment; for example air, water, the climate, and soil are abiotic
Alien species – (also known as an exotic species) a species living outside of its natural range
Aquatic – relating to water
Ballast water – when boats carry cargo, it is at times necessary to sail to a port with no cargo, they fill up the hold with water, to keep the vessel upright. This ballast water would then be discarded when the cargo was loaded, sometimes containing alien organisms.
Biodiversity - the variability among living organisms on earth, including the variability within and between species and within and between ecosystems.
Biological control – is using the natural enemies of pests to help to control their population e.g. ladybirds are released to control aphid numbers in greenhouses.
Biotic factors - organic or living component parts that make up the environment such as aquatic plants, fishes, birds, and frogs.
Botulism poisoning – a type of naturally occurring food poisoning killing many birds in the Lake Greats region
Carnivore - animals that eat only meat. Example: redside dace
Cichlid – (pronounced sik-lid) are mainly freshwater fish that are most diverse in Africa and South America. There are thousands of different species of them making them one of the largest vertebrate groups on Earth. They show great variety in their adaptations for different feeding stratgergies, some feed on algae while others feed on fishes eyeballs.
Community - a group of organisms living together in a habitat. They have an effect on each other and are linked by a food web
Consumer – animals that eat plants or animals, they do not produce their own food as plants do. The first consumer in a food chain would feed on plants and be called the primary consumer, the animals which feed on a primary consumers are the secondary consumers, then animals feeding on the secondary consumers would be the tertiary consumers.
Decomposer – feed on dead and decaying matter and return nutrients back to the soil. Bacteria and fungi are the most common decomposers.
Ecosystem - all the interacting parts of a biological community and its environment, for example, a stream
Endangered - any species at risk of extinction or extirpation throughout all or most of its range
Exotic species – (also known as an alien species) a species living outside of its natural range.
Extirpated – (also known as local extinction) when a species no longer exists in a location where it once used to e.g. Atlantic salmon in Lake Ontario, but still exists in other areas of the world.

Fertilizer – applied to soils to aid plant growth, often containing nitrogen and phosphorus. Applied to farm land or residential gardens they can get into the ecosystem and cause problems.
Freshwater – water containing low concentrations of salts, as opposed to seawater.
Greenhouse effect – the heating of the surface of the Earth, caused by a build up of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane.
Habitat - the type of place where a plant or animal naturally lives or grows, for example, a streamside pool of water
Herbicide – a chemical used to kill unwanted plants
Herbivore – an animal which feeds only on vegetation, does not eat meat
Humus – organic material in soil
Invasive organism - species whose introduction and/or spread outside their natural past or present distribution threatens biological diversity
Malaria – a mosquito born infectious disease
Microbe – an organism usually too small to be seen by the naked eye, including bacteria and viruses
Native species – organisms which are naturally found in a given area, they have not been introduced by humans.
Natural range – the geographical area within which a species can be found
Omnivore – animals which feed on both meat and vegetation
Organism – anything which is alive e.g. plants, animals and bacteria
Parasite – an organism which lives within or upon another living organism, a host,
Pesticide – a substance used to kill pest species
Photosynthesis – the process by which plants convert the sun's energy into food
Polar ice caps – a region of the planet which is covered in ice
Population - all the organisms that constitute a specific group or occur in a specified habitat
Pollutant - a term for different types of harmful materials that are released into the environment through human activities
Population - all the organisms that constitute a specific group or occur in a specified habitat
Predator – an animal which kills and eats another animal
Producer - organisms that produce organic compounds from inorganic compounds, i.e. green plants convert sunlight into energy, they produce their own food.
Runoff – (surface) when rain or snowmelt flow over the land into a waterway, often picking up substances on the way, e.g. salt from roads.
Scavenger – when an animal feeds on a dead animal which was not killed by the scavanger animal itself, or others of its species
Sewage outlet – location where sewage flows into a waterway
Siltation - to choke, fill, cover, or obstruct with silt or mud
Spawning - the act of mating by fishes, often involving the release of eggs and sperm (milt), to fertilize the eggs

Species - a narrow classification grouping for organisms; e.g., a wolf is the species Canis lupus, while a dog is the species Canis familiaris
Sub-Saharan Africa – the area of the African continent which lies south of the Sahara desert
Subtropical – areas immediately north and south of the tropical zone.
Surface water – water collecting on the ground e.g. in a river or lake (other waters are groundwater or atmospheric water)
Terrestrial – relating to land as opposed to water
Urbanization – the growth of urban areas also refers to the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas.
Water Cycle - the patterns and processes of global water distribution. It is a closed system that circulates water through the biosphere. The water cycle consists of evaporation, transpiration, condensation, and precipitation.
Watershed - the region draining into a river, river system, lake or other body of water.
Wetland - is a term used to describe areas, which are neither fully terrestrial nor fully aquatic. They include marshes, swamps, peat lands (including bogs and fens), flood meadows, lakes and ponds, rivers and streams, estuaries and other coastal waters (including salt marshes, mangroves and even coral reefs). These areas range in character from the majestic cypress swamps to shallow depressions, which hold water at most only a few weeks out of the year.