Biodiversity Loss Key Terms:

- **Biodiversity - (Short for "biological diversity")** The variety of life on Earth, including the number of species on Earth or within an area.
- **Organism -** An individual living being.
- **Population -** all the organisms of the same group or species, which live in a particular geographical area, and have the capability of interbreeding.
- **Community -** an interacting group of various species in a single geographical area.
- **Range** - The geographic region in which a plant or animal naturally lives or grows.
- **Ecology** - A branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings. A scientist who works in this field is called an **ecologist**.
- **Fossil** - Any preserved remains or traces of ancient life. There are many different types of fossils: The bones and other body parts of dinosaurs are called "body fossils." Things like footprints are called "trace fossils." Even specimens of dinosaur poop are fossils.
- **Geologic time** - The span of time that covers Earth's 4.5 billion-year history. Scientists divide geologic time into successively briefer intervals of time, called eons, periods, epochs, eras and ages.
- **Geologic record** - Mineral deposits and fossils that form in rock. Geologists can "read" these minerals to decipher what Earth's climate and geology was like (such as dry spells, earthquakes or volcanic eruptions) when the rock's ingredients were laid down. Fossils and other mineral can signal what life may have existed at the same time.
- **Mass extinction** - Loss of 75 percent of the world's species in a short time period, typically defined as 2 million years or less. Our planet has experienced 5 known mass extinctions.
- **Conservation -** The protection, preservation, management, or restoration of natural environments and the ecological communities that inhabit them.
- **Network** (in ecology) - a map of the interaction between the biotic (and possibly abiotic) elements of an ecosystem. A network contains nodes and links between these nodes, an ecological node may represent an individual plant or animal, a whole population or species.