The natural world

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each ecology term with its meaning.

1 biodiversity	____	a maximum population an environment can support
2 ecological niche	____	b variety of inherited characteristics within a species
3 food web	____	c non-native organism that spreads and causes harm
4 keystone species	____	d gradual change in a biological community over time
5 invasive species	____	e variety of life at genetic, species and ecosystem levels
6 carrying capacity	____	f network of linked feeding relationships
7 ecological succession	____	g reduction in the number of individuals
8 habitat fragmentation	____	h organism with a disproportionately large ecosystem effect
9 population decline	____	i division of a habitat into smaller isolated areas
10 genetic diversity	____	j species' role, resource use and environmental requirements

2 Complete the ecological collocations.

capacity | decline | diversity | fragmentation | niche | species | succession | web

1 occupy an ecological _____

2 disrupt a food _____

3 introduce an invasive _____

4 exceed the carrying _____

5 undergo population _____

6 maintain genetic _____

7 accelerate habitat _____

8 observe ecological _____

3 Choose the most precise term for the context.

1 A road divides one forest into isolated patches: *fragmentation* / *succession*.

2 Several linked predator-prey relationships: *food web* / *life cycle*.

3 A sea otter strongly shapes the whole community: *keystone species* / *prey species*.

4 A lake can support no more than 500 adult fish: *carrying capacity* / *genetic diversity*.

5 Pioneer plants are followed by shrubs and trees: *succession* / *migration*.

6 An introduced mussel spreads and displaces native species: *invasive* / *endemic*.

7 A species has many different inherited traits: *genetic diversity* / *habitat diversity*.

8 Numbers fall steadily over twenty years: *population decline* / *extinction*.

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4 Complete the reserve assessment with terms from the box.

biodiversity | carrying capacity | ecological niche | ecological succession | food web | genetic diversity | habitat fragmentation | invasive species | keystone species | population decline

The valley supports high **1** _____, but a new road may cause **2** _____. The wolf is treated as a **3** _____ because its predation changes the wider **4** _____. Deer numbers now approach the habitat's **5** _____. Meanwhile, an **6** _____ plant is occupying the **7** _____ of several native herbs. Rangers are tracking a butterfly's **8** _____ and testing whether low **9** _____ limits recovery. Abandoned fields also show early **10** _____.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Connecting forest fragments

A wide road separated two forest populations of dormice. Although suitable woodland remained on both sides, few animals crossed the open ground. The smaller population became increasingly isolated, raising concern about inbreeding and local extinction. Conservationists planted a continuous hedge and built a vegetated bridge over the road. Cameras later recorded dormice using both routes. Movement alone does not prove recovery, so researchers are also measuring breeding success, survival and genetic exchange over several generations.

1 What prevented regular movement? _____

2 Why was isolation a genetic concern? _____

3 What two connections were created? _____

4 What evidence shows the routes are used? _____

5 Why is movement alone insufficient evidence? _____

6 What three outcomes are researchers measuring? _____

6 Rewrite using the expression in capitals.

1 The road split the habitat into separate areas. **FRAGMENTATION** ___

2 The environment cannot support more deer. **CAPACITY** _____

3 The introduced plant harms native communities. **INVASIVE** _____

4 The community is changing gradually after the fire. **SUCCESSION** ___

OVER TO YOU

Write a **120-150 word** ecological assessment of a habitat. Explain key relationships, one pressure, likely consequences and the evidence needed to judge recovery.

[ ] Use at least ten target expressions. [ ] Distinguish a food web from a food chain. [ ] Separate observation from evidence of recovery.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Ecology terms

1 **e** 2 **j** 3 **f** 4 **h** 5 **c** 6 **a** 7 **d** 8 **i** 9 **g** 10 **b**

2 Ecological collocations

1 **niche** 2 **web** 3 **species** 4 **capacity** 5 **decline** 6 **diversity** 7 **fragmentation** 8 **succession**

3 Precise terms

1 **fragmentation** 2 **food web** 3 **keystone species** 4 **carrying capacity**
5 **succession** 6 **invasive** 7 **genetic diversity** 8 **population decline**

4 Reserve assessment

1 **biodiversity** 2 **habitat fragmentation** 3 **keystone species** 4 **food web** 5 **carrying capacity** 6 **invasive species** 7 **ecological niche** 8 **population decline** 9 **genetic diversity** 10 **ecological succession**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 The open ground beside the road. 2 It raised the risk of inbreeding and local extinction. 3 A hedge and a vegetated bridge.
4 Camera records. 5 It does not show that the population is recovering. 6 Breeding success, survival and genetic exchange.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 The road caused habitat **fragmentation**. 2 The deer population has reached carrying **capacity**. 3 It is an **invasive species**.
4 The community is undergoing ecological **succession**.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check ecological precision, causal links and measurable evidence.