**13.1 Ecologists Study Relationships**

***Key Concept****: Ecology is the study of relationships among organisms in their environment (niche).*

**Niche**: where an organism lives, stays healthy, reproduces and behaves and all of its biotic and abiotic factors.

**Habitat:** the combined biotic and abiotic factors found in an area where an organism lives.

**Ecologists**: A person who studies the environment (living and non-living things).

* Levels of organization
  + **Organism**: individual living thing
  + **Population**: a group of the same species that lives in one area.
  + **Community:** a group of different species that live together in one area.
  + **Ecosystem**: includes all of the organisms (and living things) as well as the climate, soil, water, rocks, and all of the other nonliving things in a given area.
  + **Biome**: a major regional community of organism characterized by the climate conditions and plant communities that thrive there.
  + **Biosphere**: the whole surface of the earth and the atmosphere

