

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Exploring Ecology: Understanding Populations and Communities

### Short Answer Key

1. The main difference between a population and a community is that a population consists of individuals of the same species living in the same area, while a community consists of populations of different species interacting within a shared habitat.
2. Example of a population: A group of wolves living in a forest.  
Example of a community: The various populations of plants, animals, and microorganisms in a pond ecosystem.
3. Ecologists study factors such as population size, density, distribution, demographics, reproductive rates, and interactions with other species to understand the dynamics of populations.
4. A community within an ecosystem consists of multiple populations of different species interacting within a shared habitat, contributing to the overall biodiversity and functioning of the ecosystem.
5. Interactions within a community, such as competition, predation, mutualism, and parasitism, play essential roles in regulating population sizes, shaping species distributions, and maintaining ecosystem balance.

