

Most life exists within a 100 metre layer on the surface of the earth and obeys a number of simple natural principles that we will study in this course. We will examine how species are organized into communities and learn about the flow and recycling of resources in nature. The zone of life on earth, or the 'biosphere', is a highly dynamic system and we will study how and why mixtures of species change through time. People have been influencing the biosphere for at least one million years and conservation is about managing the effects of human impact on ecosystems so that we leave the biosphere in a suitable condition for future generations. We will study the management and conservation of various ecosystems and discuss how to accommodate the competing demands of the growing human population and the rest of life on earth. There will be an assessment of the present status of global ecosystems and what the future might hold.

Student participation is encouraged through a class debate and assessment will be by open book class tests and a multiple choice exam.

