

# Glossary of Key Words

**adaptation:** Behavioral or physical characteristics that help an animal or plant survive in its environment.

**aquatic habitat:** An area of water where water-dependent plants and animals find food, water, and shelter and are adapted to life in water. One of three distinct habitats in Sabino Canyon which is in the creek itself.

**aquifer:** An underground reservoir of water.

**camouflage:** Patterns and colors which blend in with the surrounding environment. Animals may have camouflage marking to help them remain unseen within their surroundings.

**carnivore:** A meat eater.

**consumer:** Animals which rely on producers or other consumers (animals) for food/energy.

**cultural "clues":** Things that were used and left behind by cultures of long ago, such as trash middens (piles), pottery shards, metates, shelter ruins, etc.

**desert habitat:** A hot, dry place which receives very little rain. A place where plants and animals adapted to these conditions find food, water, and shelter. One of three distinct habitats in Sabino Canyon which surrounds the riparian area

**evaporate:** The process by which water changes from a liquid to a gaseous state.

**food chain:** The transfer of energy from plants (producers) through animals that eat plants, and animals that eat other animals.

**food web:** Interwoven pattern of food chains.

**habitat:** The area in which an animal or plant lives. A habitat includes sufficient food, water and shelter to meet an animal's survival needs.

**herbivore:** A plant eater.

**Hohokam:** An indigenous group of people who inhabited the Tucson Basin from about A.D. 300 to 1500. The Hohokam relied upon natural objects in their surrounding environment for their survival.

**larva(e):** The immature stage of complete metamorphosis in which an insect does not resemble the adult.

**mesquite beans:** The fruit of the mesquite tree. A major food source for the Hohokam as well as other desert animals. Hohokam would grind the beans into flour to use for broths, breads, and stews.

**metamorphosis:** The process of change an insect or other animal goes through in its development into the adult stage. Simple/incomplete metamorphosis a three-stage cycle; complete metamorphosis is a four stage cycle.

**metate:** A coarse, flat stone used to grind mesquite beans and other items.

**monsoon:** In Tucson, the mid-summer rain showers originating in the Gulf of Mexico.

**nymph:** Immature stage of an insect which undergoes simple/incomplete metamorphosis.

**omnivore:** Something that eats both plants and animals.

**pit houses:** The typical shelter of the Hohokam -- a one to two foot "pit" in the ground and with trees as posts and other plants and mud for a covering. The construction allowed the house to stay cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

**producer:** Green plants which make food/energy from sunlight and simple organic material.

**pupa(e):** The resting stage of complete metamorphosis during which an insect changes from larva to adult.

**riparian habitat:** A streamside place where plants and animals find food, water and shelter close to the stream. One of three distinct habitats in Sabino Canyon which runs along the shores of Sabino Creek and within the floodplain