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Life Sciences

LS2 – Ecosystems: Interactions Energy, and Dynamics

Concept A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

9-12.LS2.A.1 Explain how various biotic and abiotic factors affect the carrying capacity and biodiversity of an ecosystem using mathematical and/or computational representations. [Clarification Statement: Examples of biotic factors could include relationships among individuals (e.g., feeding relationships, symbioses, competition) and disease. Examples of abiotic factors could include climate and weather conditions, natural disasters, and availability of resources. Genetic diversity includes within a population and species within an ecosystem. Examples of mathematical comparisons could include graphs, charts, histograms, and population changes gathered from simulations or historical data sets.]

Concept C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning and Resilience

9-12.LS2.C.1 Evaluate the claims, evidence, and reasoning that the interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent populations of species while conditions remain stable, but changing conditions may result in new ecosystem dynamics. [Clarification Statement: Examples of changes in ecosystem conditions could include modest biological or physical changes, such as moderate hunting or a seasonal flood; and extreme changes, such as volcanic eruption or sea level rise.]

9-12.LS2.C.2 Design, evaluate, and/or refine solutions that positively impact the environment and biodiversity. [Clarification Statement: Examples of solutions may include captive breeding programs, habitat restoration, pollution mitigation, energy conservation, agriculture and mining programs, and ecotourism.]

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HS-LS2 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

**The performance expectations marked with an asterisk integrate traditional science content with engineering through a Practice or Disciplinary Core Idea. The section entitled "Disciplinary Core Ideas" is reproduced verbatim from A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Cross-Cutting Concepts, and Core Ideas. Integrated and reprinted with permission from the National Academy of Sciences.*

HS-LS2 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

HS-LS2-1. Use mathematical and/or computational representations to support explanations of factors that affect carrying capacity of ecosystems at different scales. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on quantitative analysis and comparison of the relationships among interdependent factors including boundaries, resources, climate, and competition. Examples of mathematical comparisons could include graphs, charts, histograms, and population changes gathered from simulations or historical data sets.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include deriving mathematical equations to make comparisons.]

HS-LS2-2. Use mathematical representations to support and revise explanations based on evidence about factors affecting biodiversity and populations in ecosystems of different scales. [Clarification Statement: Examples of mathematical representations include finding the average, determining trends, and using graphical comparisons of multiple sets of data.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment is limited to provided data.]

~~**HS-LS2-3. Construct and revise an explanation based on evidence for the cycling of matter and flow of energy in aerobic and anaerobic conditions.**~~ [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on conceptual understanding of the role of aerobic and anaerobic respiration in different environments.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include the specific chemical processes of either aerobic or anaerobic respiration.]

HS-LS2-4. Use mathematical representations to support claims for the cycling of matter and flow of energy among organisms in an ecosystem. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on using a mathematical model of stored energy in biomass to describe the transfer of energy from one trophic level to another and that matter and energy are conserved as matter cycles and energy flows through ecosystems. Emphasis is on atoms and molecules such as carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen being conserved as they move through an ecosystem.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment is limited to proportional reasoning to describe the cycling of matter and flow of energy.]

HS-LS2-5. Develop a model to illustrate the role of photosynthesis and cellular respiration in the cycling of carbon among the biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere. [Clarification Statement: Examples of models could include simulations and mathematical models.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include the specific chemical steps of photosynthesis and respiration.]

HS-LS2-6. Evaluate claims, evidence, and reasoning that the complex interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent numbers and types of organisms in stable conditions, but changing conditions may result in a new ecosystem. [Clarification Statement: Examples of changes in ecosystem conditions could include modest biological or physical changes, such as moderate hunting or a seasonal flood; and extreme changes, such as volcanic eruption or sea level rise.]

HS-LS2-7. Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity.* [Clarification Statement: Examples of human activities can include urbanization, building dams, and dissemination of invasive species.]

HS-LS2-8. Evaluate evidence for the role of group behavior on individual and species' chances to survive and reproduce. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on: (1) distinguishing between group and individual behavior, (2) identifying evidence supporting the outcomes of group behavior, and (3) developing logical and reasonable arguments based on evidence. Examples of group behaviors could include flocking, schooling, herding, and cooperative behaviors such as hunting, migrating, and swarming.]

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Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
<p>Developing and Using Models Modeling in 9–12 builds on K–8 experiences and progresses to using, synthesizing, and developing models to predict and show how relationships among variables between systems and their components in the natural and designed worlds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a model based on evidence to illustrate the relationships between systems or components of a system. (HS-LS2-5) <p>Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking Mathematical and computational thinking in 9-12 builds on K-8 experiences and progresses to using algebraic thinking and analysis, a range of linear and nonlinear functions including trigonometric functions, exponentials and logarithms, and computational tools for statistical analysis to analyze, represent, and model data. Simple computational simulations are created and used based on mathematical models of basic assumptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use mathematical and/or computational representations of phenomena or design solutions to support explanations. (HS-LS2-1) Use mathematical representations of phenomena or design solutions to support and revise explanations.(HS-LS2-2) Use mathematical representations of phenomena or design solutions to support claims. (HS-LS2-4) <p>Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions Constructing explanations and designing solutions in 9–12 builds on K–8 experiences and progresses to explanations and designs that are supported by multiple and independent student-generated sources of evidence consistent with scientific ideas, principles, and theories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct and revise an explanation based on valid and reliable evidence obtained from a variety of sources (including students’ own investigations, models, theories, simulations, peer review) and the assumption that theories and laws that describe the natural world operate today as they did in the past 	<p>LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystems have carrying capacities, which are limits to the numbers of organisms and populations they can support. These limits result from such factors as the availability of living and nonliving resources and from such challenges such as predation, competition, and disease. Organisms would have the capacity to produce populations of great size were it not for the fact that environments and resources are finite. This fundamental tension affects the abundance (number of individuals) of species in any given ecosystem. (HS-LS2-1),(HS-LS2-2) <p>LS2.B: Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photosynthesis and cellular respiration (including anaerobic processes) provide most of the energy for life processes. (HS-LS2-3) Plants or algae form the lowest level of the food web. At each link upward in a food web, only a small fraction of the matter consumed at the lower level is transferred upward, to produce growth and release energy in cellular respiration at the higher level. Given this inefficiency, there are generally fewer organisms at higher levels of a food web. Some matter reacts to release energy for life functions, some matter is stored in newly made structures, and much is discarded. The chemical elements that make up the molecules of organisms pass through food webs and into and out of the atmosphere and soil, and they are combined and recombined indifferent ways. At each link in an ecosystem, matter and energy are conserved. (HS-LS2-4) Photosynthesis and cellular respiration are important components of the carbon cycle, in which carbon is exchanged among the biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and geosphere through chemical, physical, geological, and biological processes. (HS-LS2-5) <p>LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A complex set of interactions within an ecosystem can keep its numbers and types of organisms relatively constant over long periods of time under stable conditions. If a modest biological or physical disturbance to an ecosystem occurs, it may return to its more or less original status (i.e., the ecosystem is resilient), as opposed to becoming a very different ecosystem. Extreme fluctuations in conditions or the size of any population, however, can challenge the functioning of ecosystems in terms of resources and habitat availability. (HS-LS2-2),(HS-LS2-6) 	<p>Cause and Effect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empirical evidence is required to differentiate between cause and correlation and make claims about specific causes and effects. (HS-LS2-8) <p>Scale, Proportion, and Quantity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The significance of a phenomenon is dependent on the scale, proportion, and quantity at which it occurs. (HS-LS2-1) Using the concept of orders of magnitude allows one to understand how a model atone scale relates to a model at another scale. (HS-LS2-2) <p>Systems and System Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models (e.g., physical, mathematical, computer models) can be used to simulate systems and interactions—including energy, matter, and information flows—within and between systems at different scales. (HS-LS2-5) <p>Energy and Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy cannot be created or destroyed—it only moves between one place and another place, between objects and/or fields, or between systems. (HS-LS2-4) Energy drives the cycling of matter within and between systems. (HS-LS2-3) <p>Stability and Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of science deals with constructing explanations of how things change and how they remain stable. (HS-LS2-6),(HS-LS2-7)