

BIOL2015 – Ecology Field Studies – core concepts

Chronosequences: long term changes in vegetation driven by soil formation and nutrient leaching. Soil-vegetation community and soil relations. Plant species adaptations to nutrient stress. Assessing key features of vegetation structure plant diversity.

Relating animal distribution to habitat variables and species physiological adaptations. Estimating species distribution and abundance at a fine scale (ghost crabs on sand dunes) and broader scale (funnel web spiders and vegetation features) using various transect based methods.

Plant species distribution and abundance across steep environmental gradients. E.g. mangroves. Using the point centred quarter method.

Animal plant interactions: assessing and interpreting variation in herbivory by various feeding guilds (leaf chewers, leaf miners and gallers) in different habitat locations.

Animal feeding interactions and ecology: Diet selection by a key predator (dingos) and prey abundance. Assessment and interpretation of small mammal abundance using various tools (trapping, sighting).