



Glossary

Alaska Native science

a holistic approach to understanding the natural world in the context of indigenous and subsistence ways of life; the information and knowledge are gained experientially and through stories passed down over generations; incorporates traditional knowledge (see term below) and Alaska Native culture and beliefs

climate

average weather characteristics (such as temperature, humidity, air pressure, wind speed and direction, and precipitation amounts) of an area over a period of time, usually more than 30 years

climate change

significant changes in the average or typical weather characteristics of an area, observed over a decade or longer

ecosystem

a system in nature that is made of both living and nonliving things that interact with each other

global warming

the increase of average global temperatures; since about 1880, Earth's average temperature has risen by nearly one degree Celsius

holistic

viewing something as a complete, interdependent system rather than concentrating on particular component parts

qualitative data

observations about wildlife and habitat that are not collected by instruments and are generally not numerical; may include information such as stories or photographs

quantitative data

observations that are recorded in number form and collected using instruments, such as tools or surveys; data are analyzed mathematically and often entered into computer models to predict outcomes or trends

science

a systematic approach to gathering knowledge and information

spirit

in Alaska Native culture, the unifying life force that connects all aspects of nature

subsistence

the practice of harvesting resources (such as fish, wildlife, and plants) from nature for food, shelter, or cultural or other personal needs

traditional knowledge (also, Alaska Native ways of knowing)

knowledge and information that is accumulated through generations of careful observations and direct interaction with the environment on a frequent basis

weather

the state of the atmosphere at a given time in a particular place

Western science

an approach to understanding the natural world objectively, using the scientific process; data, which is typically collected in numerical form, may be used to create a computer model designed to project trends