

# Climate Change and the Pacific Islands: Vocabulary

**acidic**

containing acid. *Ocean acidification* occurs when carbon dioxide from the air mixes with seawater, making the ocean more acidic.

**adaptation**

an adjustment to a new or changing environment

**catchment**

a structure or natural area in which fresh water is collected

**compost**

a mixture of organic matter or waste that provides nutrients to soil and helps plants grow

**conserve (also conservation)**

to protect something from harm, loss, or change. A conservation group protects and carefully manages natural resources.

**contaminate**

to make unclean or to pollute by contact

**coral bleaching**

a process in which coral reefs turn white. The corals that build a reef lose their color when certain environmental conditions change, such as when the ocean gets too warm or becomes too acidic.

**diversity**

variety, or having more than one kind

**droughts**

long periods of low rainfall and very dry conditions

**ecosystem**

a community of living things together with their physical environment

**endangered species**

a species (type of living thing) that is in danger of dying out and disappearing from a place forever

**erosion**

the movement of broken-down rock, soil, or sand from one place to another by running water or wind

**extinction**

the end of a species brought about when the last living member of that species dies

**habitat**

the place where a plant or animal lives

**indigenous**

native

**invasive species**

living things that do not naturally belong to an ecosystem

**invertebrates**

animals that do not have a backbone, such as corals, snails, oysters, or jellyfish

**marine**

found in or produced by the ocean

**pollution**

anything harmful or poisonous that is put into an environment. Types of island pollution include human and animal waste, chemicals used in farming, and oil and other fuels.

**predators**

animals that eat other living animals. The animals that predators eat are called *prey*.

**resilience**

an ecosystem's ability to resist or recover from changing conditions (adjective: resilient)

**runoff**

water that is not absorbed by soil but instead runs off of land into a body of water. On Pacific islands, runoff commonly carries sediment, fertilizers used in agriculture, and human and animal waste.

**sediment**

very small pieces of broken-down rocks. On high islands, rivers and streams carry sediment to the ocean, where it eventually settles to the bottom

**stewards**

protectors

**sustainable**

a method of using resources so that they remain available for future generations

**watershed**

an area of land that catches rain and moves it downhill into a body of water. High island watersheds consist of forests, wetlands, and coastal areas.