

ECOSYSTEMS GLOSSARY

Adaptations: the way in which plants or animals have changed to suit the environment in which they live

Ecosystem: A unit which links living organisms with each other and their physical environment (rocks, soils, air and water) – contain living and non-living elements

Equilibrium: When a vegetation community is relatively stable and self sustaining – this can be interrupted by fire

Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*): common plant on upland moorlands

Moorland: a high upland ecosystem, which is of international importance, characterized by

Muirburn: a method of upland management using controlled burning, o

National Park: an area which has protected status, and provides a

Niche: the status of an organism within its environment

Parasites: plants, animals and insects which live off others, and take their

Plagioclimax: A stable plant community that has arisen as a result of human intervention in the natural succession of communities – heather moorlands are an example of this

Plant succession: Sequence of plant communities inhabiting the same site through time – these move through a series of stages until a climax community is reached (for the UK, this is deciduous woodland)

Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*): a common bird found in heather moorlands – managed populations

Trophic Level: a level of the food chain. Plants are producers. Animals and insects are consumers. The higher up the food chain, the higher the trophic level, which refers to the transfer of energy.