

# QCE BIOLOGY UNITS 3&4



# **12** Diversity Indices

**Key Idea**: Diversity indices quantify the biodiversity in an area and can be used to measure ecosystem health.

The health of an ecosystem can be assessed by measuring both the number and relative abundance of organisms present. A change in species composition over time can therefore indicate changes in that ecosystem's status.

#### Simpson's index of diversity

Simpson's Index of Diversity (below) produces values ranging between 0 and almost 1. There are other variants of this index, but the more limited range of values provided by this calculation makes it more easily interpreted. No single index offers the "best" measure of diversity; each is chosen on the basis of suitability to different situations.

Simpson's Index of Diversity (D) is easily calculated using the following simple formula. Communities with a wide range of species produce a higher score than communities dominated by larger numbers of only a few species.

### D = 1-(∑(n/N)<sup>2</sup>)

**D** = Diversity index

- $\mathbf{N}$  = Total number of individuals (of all species) in the sample
- **n** = Number of individuals of each species in the sample

Certain **indicator species** are also useful in this respect as they are associated with habitats of a particular status, e.g. unpolluted water. Scientists quantify biodiversity using a diversity index. Diversity indices take account of both the species evenness and species richness and can be used to assess environmental stress (or recovery).

#### Example of species diversity in a stream

The example below describes the results from a survey of stream invertebrates. It is not necessary to know the species to calculate a diversity index as long as the different species can be distinguished. For the example below, Simpson's Index of Diversity using  $D = 1 - (\sum (n/N)^2)$  is:

	Species	n	n/N	(n/N) <sup>2</sup>
А	(backswimmer)	12	0.300	0.090
В	(stonefly larva)	7	0.175	0.031
С	(silver water beetle)	2	0.050	0.003
D	(caddisfly larva)	6	0.150	0.023
Е	(water spider)	5	0.125	0.016
F	(mayfly larva	8	0.20	0.040
		Σn=40	$\Sigma(n/N)^2$	<sup>2</sup> =0.201

#### D = 1-0.201 = 0.799



#### Using diversity indices and the role of indicator species

To be properly interpreted, indices are usually evaluated with reference to earlier measurement or a standard ecosystem measure. The photographs above show samples from two stream communities, a high diversity community with a large number of invertebrate species (left) and a low diversity community (right) with fewer species in large numbers. These photographs also show indicator species. The left hand image shows a stonefly (1) and an alderfly larva (2). These species (together with mayfly larvae) are typical of clean, well oxygenated water. The right hand image is dominated by snails (3), which are tolerant of a wide range of conditions, included degraded environments.

1. Why might it be useful to have baseline data (prior knowledge of a system) before interpreting a diversity index?

2. (a) How might you monitor the recovery of a stream ecosystem following an ecological restoration project? \_

(b) What role could indicator species play in the monitoring programme? \_\_\_\_



#### Studying biodiversity

In a field study, students used quadrats to sample the invertebrate animals in the leaf litter of two different areas, a rainforest fringe and a eucalypt plantation. They found 8 species and recorded the numbers of each species present at each site. The results are presented in the tables and images below. The invertebrates are not drawn to scale.

	Site 1:	Rainforest				Site 2: Eucal	ypt plantation	
Species	Number of animals (n)	n/N	(n/N) <sup>2</sup>		Species	Number of animals (n)	n/N	
Species 1	35				Species 1	74		
Species 2	14				Species 2	20		
Species 3	13				Species 3	3		
Species 4	12				Species 4	3		
Species 5	8				Species 5	1		
Species 6	6				Species 6	0		
Species 7	6				Species 7	0		
Species 8	4				Species 8	0		
	∑n = 98		$\Sigma(n/N)^2 =$			∑n = 101		Σ(n/ľ
*	×	Ť	A CONTRACTOR	A STAN	The states			
Species 1 Mite	Species 2 Ant	Species 3 Earwig	Species 4 Woodlice	Species 5 Centipede	Species Longho	s 6 rn beetle	Species 7 Small beetle	Spe Pse

3. Write a hypothesis for this investigation: \_\_\_\_\_

4. (a) Complete the two tables above by calculating the values for n/N and  $(n/N)^2$  for the student's two sampling sites:

(b) Calculate the Simpson's Index of Diversity for site 1: \_\_\_\_

(c) Calculate the Simpson's Index of Diversity for site 2:

(d) Compare the diversity of the two sites and suggest any reasons for it: \_\_\_\_

5. (a) Species richness is a measure of the number of different species in an area. Which of the two areas sample above has the greatest species richness?

(b) Why would measuring species richness not be as informative as measuring species diversity?

### 22 Community Change With Altitude

Key Idea: Changes in physical factors associated with increasing altitude produce marked bands of vegetation (zonation).

The Kosciusko National Park lies on the border between Victoria and New South Wales. In 1959, a transect between Berridale and the summit of Mt. Kosciusko was sampled. The map on the right shows the transect as a dotted line representing a distance of some 50-60 km.

The distribution of plant species on Mount Kosciusko is affected by changes in the physical conditions with increasing altitude. The two graphs below show (1) the profile of the transect showing changes in vegetation and soil types with increasing altitude and (2) the changes in temperature and rainfall (precipitation) with altitude.

The low altitude soil around Berridale has low levels of organic matter supporting dry tussock grassland vegetation. The high altitude alpine soils are rich in organic matter, largely because of slow decay rates.





#### Profile of Mount Kosciusko



Approximate distance from the summit (km)

- 1. Calculate the vertical distance (change in altitude) in metres, between Berridale and Mount Kosciusko: \_
- 2. Name the three physical factors illustrated on the previous page: \_\_\_\_
- 3. Using the diagrams and graphs on the previous page, describe the following physical measurements for the three sample sites listed below:

	Altitude (m)	Temperature (°C)	Precipitation (mm)	Soil type
Berridale:				
Wilson's Valley:				
Mt Kosciusko:				

- 4. Study the graph of temperature vs altitude. How does the temperature change with increasing altitude?
- 5. Study the graph of precipitation vs altitude. How does the precipitation change with increasing altitude?
- 6. Why is the leaf litter slow to decay in alpine soil?
- 7. What is the name given to the banded distribution pattern of the vegetation on the slopes of Mt. Kosciusko?
- 8. Wet sclerophyll forest is found part way up the slope of Mt. Kosciusko.
  - (a) Study the profile on the previous page and determine the altitude range for wet sclerophyll forest (in metres):
  - (b) What physical factor probably prevents the wet sclerophyll forest growing at a lower altitude?
  - (c) What physical factor probably prevents the wet sclerophyll forest growing at a higher altitude?
- 9. Name a physical factor other than temperature or precipitation that changes with altitude: \_\_\_\_
- 10. Describe another example of a banded pattern of species distribution in response to an environmental gradient:

11. Discuss the contribution of environmental gradients to community diversity:

### **58** The Role of Keystone Species

**Key Idea**: All organisms within an ecosystem contribute to its structure and functioning, but keystone species have a disproportionate effect on ecosystem processes.

Although every species has a role in ecosystem function, some have a disproportionate effect on ecosystem processes and stability (how unchanging the ecosystem is over time). These species are called **keystone species** and they are important

#### Why are keystone species important?

A keystone species is one that plays a unique and crucial role in the way an ecosystem functions. Often, but not always, keystone species are top predators. The role of the keystone species varies from ecosystem to ecosystem, but the loss of a keystone species from any ecosystem has a domino effect, and a large number of species can be affected. This can lead to can rapid ecosystem change or the collapse of the ecosystem completely.



The term keystone species comes from the analogy of the keystone in a true arch (above). An archway is supported by a series of stones, the central one being the **keystone**. If the keystone is removed the arch collapses.



Top predators, such as Australia's dingo, are often keystone species. Many conservationists regard dingoes as a functional replacement for native predators that are now extinct, such as the Tasmanian tiger. Dingoes have a varied diet and are a major constraint on introduced species, such as a foxes and pigs, thereby helping to maintain native mammal diversity.



The endangered southern cassowary is a key species in Australia's wet tropics. They are obligate frugivores (fruit eaters), and their gut passes seeds, unharmed, into a pile of manure. More than 200 plant species depend on the cassowary to disperse their seeds, yet their populations are all declining. Their loss would also mean the loss of an ecological role.

because they play a pivotal role in the way the ecosystem works, e.g. as top predators or by recycling nutrients. The loss of a keystone species can have a large and rapid impact on the structure and function of an ecosystem, changing the balance of relationships and leading to instability. This has important implications for ecosystem management because many keystone species are endangered.



#### Keystone species in action

The idea of the keystone species was first hypothesised in 1969 by Robert Paine. He studied an area of rocky seashore, noting that diversity seemed to be correlated with the number of predators (ochre starfish) present (i.e. diversity declined as the number of predators declined).

To test this he removed the starfish from an 8 m by 2 m area of seashore. Initially, the barnacle population increased rapidly before collapsing and being replaced by mussels and gooseneck barnacles. Eventually the mussels crowded out the gooseneck barnacles and the algae that covered the rocks. Limpets that fed on the algae were lost and the number of species present in the study area dropped from 15 to 8.



All species of banksias produce large amounts of nectar, and are a vital component of food chains in the Australian bush. In the Avon Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, the acorn banksia is the sole source of nectar for honeyeaters at certain times of the year. The loss of this plant species would also result in the loss

of honeyeaters from the region.

1. Why are keystone species so important to ecosystem function? \_\_\_\_

#### Australian keystone species



Many sharks are top predators and are keystone species in the waters around Australia. One shark species inhabiting Shark Bay (WA) is the tiger shark. It doesn't even have to kill its prey to exert an effect on ecosystem structure. The presence of the tiger shark causes marine herbivores such as green turtles and dugongs to avoid the area or to spend less time grazing because they are looking out for the sharks. As a result, the seagrass meadows thrive and support many more species than would be possible if they were grazed intensively by herbivores. As a result, biodiversity in Shark Bay is high. Fishing is the main threat to tiger sharks as they hunted for their flesh, fins, and skin. Finning, although largely banned in Australian waters, still continues illegally.



Cockatoo grass (Alloteropsis semialata) is found through tropical savannas in northern and north eastern Australia. Cockatoo grass is an early developer in the wet season, providing a food source to many animal species before other plant species are available. Cockatoo grass is considered to be a keystone species because at certain times of the year it is the only food source available for two endangered species, the golden-shouldered parrot and the Northern bettong, a small marsupial. Young cockatoo grass is a preferred food source cattle and pigs, so it is easily overgrazed, leaving little for the wild species that rely on it. Conservation efforts are made to protect stands of cockatoo grass in some areas.



The grey-headed flying fox (Pteropus poliocephalus) is found in a variety of habitats along the east coast of Australia, including Victoria. The greyheaded flying fox feeds on the fruit and nectar of over 180 species of trees, including Australian natives Eucalyptus, Banksia, palms, and myrtles. It will fly up to 50 km each night looking for food and this allows it to fulfill an important ecological role by dispersing the pollen and seeds of a wide range of plants. Its role is especially important in the subtropical rainforests as it is the only mammalian species to consume nectar and fruit in these regions. The species is under threat from the loss of foraging and roosting habitat and control measures by horticulturists to prevent crop losses.

2. For each species below, summarise the features of its ecology that contribute to its position as a keystone species:

(a)	Acorn banksia:
(b)	Southern cassowary:
(c)	Dingo:
( )	5
(d)	Tiger shark
(0)	
(A)	Cockatoo grass:
(0)	
(5)	
(1)	Grey-neaded flying fox:

## **120** Transcription in Eukaryotes

**Key Idea**: Transcription is the first step of gene expression. It involves the enzyme RNA polymerase rewriting the information into a primary RNA transcript. In eukaryotes, transcription takes place in the nucleus.

Transcription is the first stage of gene expression. It takes place in the nucleus and is carried out by the enzyme RNA polymerase, which rewrites the DNA into a primary RNA transcript using a single template strand of DNA. The protein-coding portion of a gene is bounded by an upstream start (promoter) region and a downstream terminator region. These regions control transcription by telling RNA polymerase where to start and stop transcription. In eukaryotes, non protein-coding sections called **introns** must first be removed and the remaining **exons** spliced together to form the mature mRNA before the gene can be translated into a protein. This editing process also occurs in the nucleus.

#### Transcription is carried out by RNA polymerase (RNAP)



- 2. (a) In which direction is the RNA strand synthesised?
  - (b) Explain why this is the case: \_\_\_\_\_

3. (a) Why is AUG called the start codon? \_

(b) What would the three letter code be on the DNA coding strand?

### 23 mRNA Processing in Eukaryotes

**Key Idea**: Primary mRNA molecules are modified after transcription so that the mRNA can exit the nucleus. Post transcriptional modification also enables the cell to produce a wide variety of proteins from a smaller number of genes. Once a gene is transcribed, the primary transcript is modified to produce the mRNA strand that will be translated in the

cytoplasm. Modifications to the 5' and 3' ends of the transcript enable the mRNA to exit the nucleus and remain stable long enough to be translated. Other post transcriptional modifications remove non-protein coding intronic DNA and splice exons in different combinations to produce different protein end products.

#### Primary RNA is modified by the addition of caps and tails

After transcription, both ends of the primary RNA are modified by enzymes to create 'caps' and 'tails' (below). These modifications protect the RNA from degradation and help its transport through the nuclear pore.



#### Post transcriptional modification

- Human DNA contains 25,000 genes, but produces up to one million different proteins. Each gene must therefore produce more than one protein. This is achieved through both post-transcriptional modification of the mRNA as well as post translational modifications, such as glycosylation and addition of phosphates.
- Primary RNA contains both protein coding exons and non-protein coding introns. Introns are usually removed after transcription and may be processed to create regulatory elements such as microRNAs. The exons are then spliced together ready to be translated. However, there are many alternative ways to splice the exons and these alternatives create variations in the translated proteins. The most common method of alternative splicing involves exon skipping, in which not all exons are spliced into the final mRNA (below). Other splicing options create further variants.



- 1. What is the purpose of the caps and tail on mRNA? \_
- 2. (a) What happens to the intronic sequences in DNA after transcription? \_\_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) What is one possible fate for these introns? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. How can so many proteins be produced from so few genes? \_\_\_\_
- 4. If a human produces 1 million proteins, but human DNA codes for only 25,000 genes, on average how many proteins are produced per gene?

# **135** Non-Disjunction Can Produce Aneuploidies

### **Key Idea**: Non-disjunction during meiosis results in incorrect apportioning of chromosomes to the gametes.

In meiosis, chromosomes are usually distributed to daughter cells without error. Occasionally, homologous chromosomes fail to separate properly in meiosis I, or sister chromatids fail to separate in meiosis II. In these cases, one gamete receives two of the same type of chromosome and the other gamete receives no copy. This error is known as **non-disjunction** and it results in abnormal numbers of chromosomes in the gametes. The union of an aberrant and a normal gamete at fertilisation produces offspring with an abnormal chromosome number. This condition is known as aneuploidy.



Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21)





Down syndrome is the most common of the human aneuploidies. The incidence rate in humans is about 1 in 800 births for women aged 30 to 31 years, with a **maternal age effect** (the rate increases rapidly with maternal age). Nearly all cases (approximately 95%) result from **non-disjunction** of chromosome 21 during **meiosis**. When this happens, a gamete (most commonly the oocyte) ends up with 24 rather than 23 chromosomes, and fertilisation produces a trisomic offspring. *Above: A karyogram for an individual with trisomy 21. The chromosomes are circled*.

1. Describe the consequences of non-disjunction during meiosis: \_\_\_\_

Datura stramonium



The plant *Datura stramonium* has 12 sets of chromosomes. There are 12 known aneuploids, each trisomic for a different chromosome. Interestingly each aneuploid has its own variety of seed pod shape, ranging from buckling (trisomy 3) to cocklebur (trisomy 6) and spinach (trisomy 10). All the aneuploids survive to be viable adult plants indicating plants are better able to accommodate genetic shuffling.

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2. Explain why non-disjunction in meiosis I results in a higher proportion of faulty gametes than non-disjunction in meiosis II:

3. What is the maternal age effect and what are its consequences? \_\_\_\_

### **150** Gel Electrophoresis

### **Key Idea**: Gel electrophoresis is used to separate DNA fragments on the basis of size.

Gel electrophoresis is a tool used to isolate DNA of interest for further study. It is also used for DNA profiling (comparing individuals based on their unique DNA banding profiles). DNA has an overall negative charge, so when an electrical current is run through a gel, the DNA moves towards the positive electrode. The rate at which the DNA molecules move through the gel depends primarily on their size and the strength of the electric field. The gel they move through is full of pores (holes). Smaller DNA molecules move through the pores more quickly than larger ones. At the end of the process, the DNA molecules can be stained and visualised as a series of bands. Each band contains DNA molecules of a particular size. The bands furthest from the start of the gel contain the smallest DNA fragments.



2. Describe the two forces that control the speed at which fragments pass through the gel:

(a) \_\_\_\_\_\_(b) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do the smallest fragments travel through the gel the fastest?



#### Recognition sites for selected restriction enzymes

Enzyme	Source	Recognition sites
<i>Eco</i> RI	Escherichia coli RY13	GAATTC
Haelll	Haemophilus aegyptius	GGCC
HindIII	Haemophilus influenzae Rd	AAGCTT
Hpal	Haemophilus parainfluenzae	GTTAAC
Hpall	Haemophilus parainfluenzae	CCGG
Mbol	Moraxella bovis	GATC
Taql	Thermus aquaticus	T C G A

DNA fragments for gel electrophoresis are produced by restriction digestion of DNA using restriction enzymes. Restriction enzymes are produced by bacteria as a method of eliminating foreign DNA. About 3000 different restriction enzymes have been isolated. Around 600 are commonly used in laboratories.

Restriction enzymes are named according to the species they were first isolated from, followed by a number to distinguish different enzymes isolated from the same organism.

- 4. (a) A scientist uses Hpall to cut a length of DNA. State the recognition site for Hpall: \_\_\_\_
  - (b) Circle where on the DNA sequence below Hpall would cut the following DNA sequence:

GTTAGGCCCGGCTAGCTTGACCAGTCCCGGGTCACAGTCTCTGACCCGGCTTTAGACACACTCCGGTTACTACCG

5. In 1988, the disease BLAD (Bovine Leukocyte Adhesion Deficiency) specific to Holstein cattle, was affecting the U.S. dairy industry. The disease was traced to the bull Osborndale Ivanhoe. The disease is recessive and two alleles are needed for its expression. The disease is caused by two mutations of the CD18 gene. One of the affected regions is shown below. The DNA of three individuals is shown: an unaffected individual, a carrier, and an affected individual.

Unaffected	GTGACCTTCCGGA	GGGCCAAGGGCTACCCCATCGGCC GGGCCAAGGGCTACCCCATCGGCC	TGTACTACCTGATGGACCTCT TGTACTACCTGATGGACCTCT	Allele 1 Allele 2			
Carrier	GTGACCTTCCGGA	GGGCCAAGGGCTACCCCATCGACC GGGCCAAGGGCTACCCCATCGGCC	TGTACTACCTGATGGACCTCT TGTACTACCTGATGGACCTCT	Allele 1 Allele 2			
Affected	GTGACCTTCCGGA GTGACCTTCCGGA	GGGCCAAGGGCTACCCCATCGACC GGGCCAAGGGCTACCCCATCGACC	TGTACTACCTGATGGACCTCT TGTACTACCTGATGGACCTCT	Allele 1 Allele 2			
(a) Use the restriction enzymes Taql, HaeIII, and HpaII to "cut" the sequences. Write the length of the segments produced in the spaces below. [NOTE: Taql cuts between T and C. HaeIII cuts between G and C. HpaII cuts between C and C]							
Taq1: Unaffect	ed:	_Carrier:	Affected:				
HaeIII: Unaffected:		_Carrier:	Affected:				
Hpall: Unaffected:		_Carrier:	Affected:				
(b) On the gel	s below draw in the ban	ds that would be seen for each individua	I for each restriction enzyme:				
10 bp		—					
20 bp		<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>				
40 bp		—	-				
60 bp			—				

Unaffected Carrier Affected Ladder

Haelll

Unaffected Carrier Affected

Hpall

(c) Decide which restriction enzyme(s) would be useful for identifying carriers of BLAD: \_\_\_\_

Carrier Affected Ladder

I adder

Unaffected

Taql

Key Idea: Disruptive selection in the finch Geospiza fortis produces a bimodal distribution for beak size.

The Galápagos Islands, 970 km west of Ecuador, are home to the finch species Geospiza fortis. A study during a prolonged drought on Santa Cruz Island showed how disruptive selection can change the distribution of genotypes in a population. During the drought, large and small seeds were more abundant than the preferred intermediate seed size.

Beak sizes of G. fortis were measured over a three year period (2004-2006), at the start and end of each year. At the start of the year, individuals were captured, banded, and their beaks were measured.

The presence or absence of banded individuals was recorded at the end of the year when the birds were recaptured. Recaptured individuals had their beaks measured. The proportion of banded birds in the population at the end of the year gave a measure of fitness. Absent individuals were presumed dead (fitness = 0).

Fitness related to beak size showed a bimodal distribution (left) typical of disruptive selection.



Measurements of the beak length, width, and depth were combined into one single measure.



Beak size pairing in Geospiza fortis Pairing under extremely Pairing under dry wet conditions conditions 4.0 4.0 Male beak size (single measure) *l*ale beak size (single measure) 3.0 3.0 2.0 2.0 Small beak G. fortis 1.0 1.0 0 0 -10 -1.0 -2.0 -2.0 1.0 2.0 3.0 Ó 1.0 2.0 -2.0 -1.0 0 -2.0 '-1'0 3.0 Female beak size (single measure) Female beak size (single measure)

Large beak G. fortis

A 2007 study found that breeding pairs of birds had similar beak sizes. Male and females with small beaks tended to breed together, and males and females with large beaks tended to breed together. Mate selection maintained the bimodal distribution in the population during extremely wet conditions. If beak size wasn't a factor in mate selection, the beak size would even out.

1. (a) How did the drought affect seed size on Santa Cruz Island? \_\_\_\_

(b) How did the change in seed size during the drought create a selection pressure for changes in beak size?

2. How does beak size relate to fitness (differential reproductive success) in *G. fortis*?

3. (a) Is mate selection in *G. fortis* random / non-random? (delete one)

(b) Give reasons for your answer: \_\_\_\_

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