**KEY TERMS FOR LAB EXERCISE 5:**

**Biodiversity:** All of the variety of life; usually refers to the variety of species that make up a community; concerns both species richness (the total number of different species) and the relative abundance of the different species.

**Class:** In classification, the taxonomic category above order.

**Dichotomous key:** A tool for classifying organisms, rocks, or other natural items. The key asks dichotomous questions -- questions in which there are only two possible responses. After answering a series of dichotomous questions and following the appropriate directions, the object is "keyed out" or classified. If the user makes the correct choice every time, the name of the organism will be revealed at the end. Taxonomists classify organisms according to common characteristics.

**Family:** In classification, the taxonomic category above genus.

**Genus** (plural, *genera*): A taxonomic category above the species level, designated by the first word of a species' binomial Latin name.

**Kingdom:** A taxonomic category, the second broadest after domain.

**Order:** In classification, the taxonomic category above family.

**Phylum:** A taxonomic category. Phyla are divided into classes.

**Specific epithet:** The second part of a binomial, it refers to one species within a genus.

**Systematics:** The study of biological diversity in an environmental context, encompassing taxonomy and involving the reconstruction of phylogenetic history.

**Taxon** (plural, *taxa*): The named taxonomic unit at any given level.

**Taxonomy:** The branch of biology concerned with naming and classifying the diverse forms of life.