**NAME\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Handout # \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Levels of Organization in an Ecosystem Notes**

* Ecologists have organized ecosystems into different levels according to complexity.

*1st Level of Organization (the smallest): An organism of a species*

* Species: a group of organisms that are physically similar and can reproduce with each other to produce fertile offspring.
* Examples:

*2nd Level of Organization: Population*

* Population: all of the members of the same species that are living in the same area.
* Example:

*3rd Level of Organization: Community*

* Community: All the populations of different species that live in the same area.
* Example:

*4th Level of Organization (the largest): Ecosystem*

* Ecosystem: Populations of plants and animals that interact with each other and abiotic factors in a given area.
* Example: