

Misrepresentativeness - the ambiguity and misuse of terminology in ecology

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Within the realm of ecology, the application of terms can be perplexing. Some terms are in vogue for a short time, while others are well-established but mean different things to different people. Without clear definition, this can lead to a misrepresentation or a lack of clarity for decision-makers, ecologists and stakeholders. The relevant context is a critical part of understanding the meaning. Terms such as 'significant', 'ecosystem', 'offset' and 'representativeness' are commonly used without appropriate referral to the scale or context to which they are being applied. This presentation provides examples of ambiguity and misuse, and suggests some simple solutions.