

Speaking Scientifically

Thinking More About Disturbances

A **disturbance** is when something happens that messes up the normal way an ecosystem functions.

- Sometimes **disturbances** to ecosystems are caused by humans, but other times they occur naturally.
- Sometimes **disturbances** benefit ecosystems, but other times they are harmful.

Read the chart below with a partner and see if you can think of an example to add in the final column.

		Examples:	What's another example you can think of?
True False	Some <b>disturbances</b> are naturally-occurring.	Damming of a creek by a beaver	
True False	Some <b>disturbances</b> are the result of human actions.	Development of land for farming or housing	
True False	Some <b>disturbances</b> benefit an ecosystem.	Swarms of native beetles feeding on dead and dying trees	
True False	Some <b>disturbances</b> harm an ecosystem.	Accidental introduction of a non-native species without predators	

After a **disturbance**, a **recovery** usually follows.

An ecosystem that goes through a **disturbance** is usually able to “fix itself” over time. This process is called a **recovery**.

- Sometimes **recoveries** occur naturally.
- Sometimes **recoveries** involve humans who are trying to help.

Read the chart below with a partner and see if you can think of an example to add in the final column.

		Examples:	What's another example you can think of?
True False	Some <b>recoveries</b> are naturally-occurring.	New trees sprouting from seeds after a forest fire	
True False	Some <b>recoveries</b> are managed by humans.	Non-native species of snakes poisoned on island	