

MEANING OF “ECOZOIC”

Ecozoic is based on two Greek words—*oikos* meaning house, and *zoikos* meaning of animals (*zoikos* is based on the Greek word *zoion* meaning living being).

More simply put, ecozoic is based on *eco* meaning house and *zoic* meaning life. Putting these together, ecozoic means “House of Life.”

Ecozoic shares the same root word as economics and ecology. Based on their root words, economics means the norms or rules of the house, ecology means the logic or study of the house, and ecozoic means the life of the house.

Ecozoic has additional meaning when used to refer to the Ecozoic era. Thomas Berry believed and many today believe that we are currently in a period of mass extinction and other ecosystem disturbance that is bringing to an end the Cenozoic era of Earth’s history (which began 65 million years ago after the extinction of the dinosaurs and many other species). What will follow is not clear. If we are to succeed and if nature as we know it is to flourish, then major changes will be needed in the way we live. As Thomas Berry said, “While humans cannot make a blade of grass, there is liable not to be a blade of grass unless it is accepted, protected and fostered by humans.” We will be involved in the future of our planet as never before. What will we make of it?

If we approach our role based on a “use” relationship, we will not succeed. We must open ourselves to intimate presence to, and an integral understanding of, nature. The “Ecozoic Era” represents the promise that Earth’s future will be “time of a mutually enhancing relationship among humans and the larger community of life and life systems.”