

Table 3.1 List of important terms. Examples pertain to a hypothetical research investigation into estimating the protein content of koala milk.

Term	Definition	Example
Measurement	A single piece of recorded information reflecting a characteristic of interest (e.g. length of a leaf, pH of a water aliquot mass of an individual, number of individuals per quadrat etc)	Protein content of the milk of a single female koala
Observation	A single measured sampling or experimental unit (such as an individual, a quadrat, a site etc)	A small quantity of milk from a single koala
Population	All the possible observations that could be measured and the unit of which wish to draw conclusions about (note a statistical population need not be a viable biological population)	The milk of all female koalas
Sample	The (representative) subset of the population that are observed	A small quantity of milk collected from 15 captive female koalas ^a
Variable	A set of measurements of the same type that comprise the sample. The characteristic that differs (varies) from observation to observation	The protein content of koala milk.

^a Note that such a sample may not actually reflect the defined population. Rather, it could be argued that such a sample reflects captive populations. Nevertheless, such extrapolations are common when field samples are difficult to obtain.