Chapter 4 & 5 Biodiversity: Evolution, Species Interactions, and Population Control

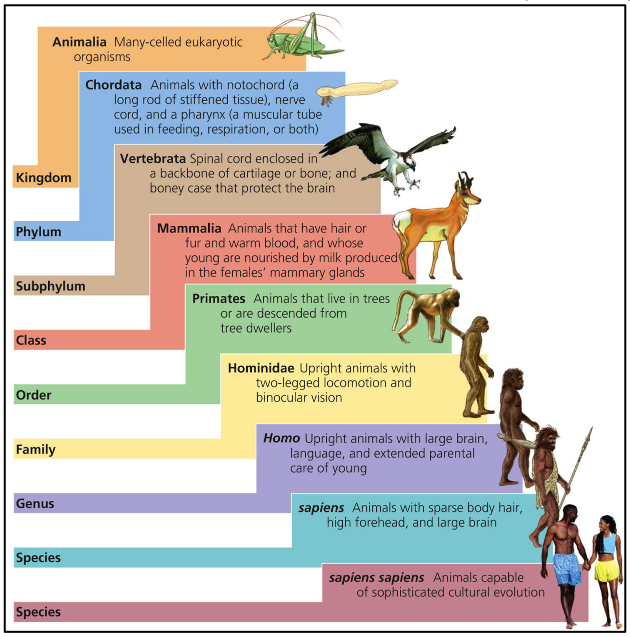
Part 1 — Evolution

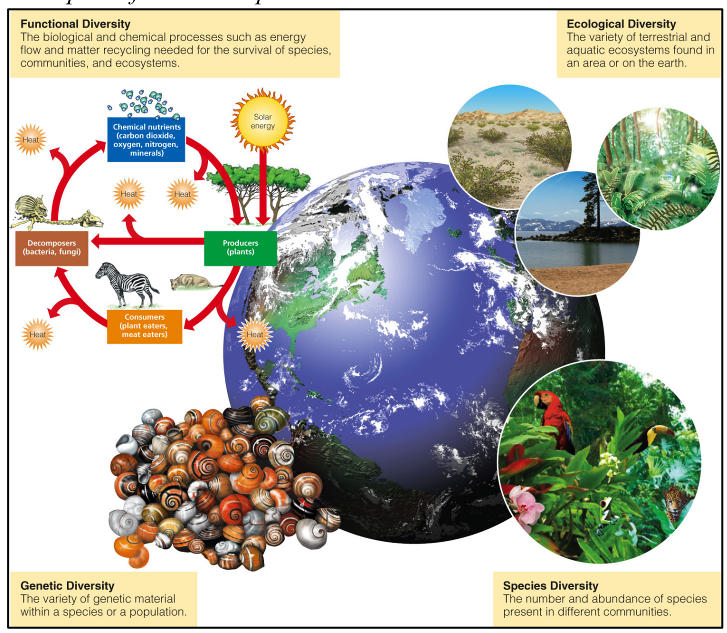
Biodiversity Is a Crucial Part of the Earth's Natural Capital

Biodiversity: variety of earth's species, or varying life forms, the genes they contain, the ecosystems they live in and the ecosystem processes of energy flow and nutrient cycling that sustain life.

- Species diversity
- Genetic diversity
- Ecosystem diversity
- Functional diversity

Biodiversity is an important part of natural capital





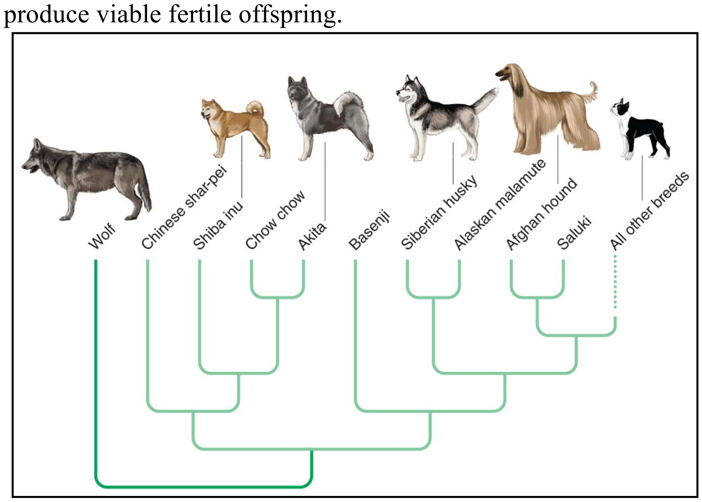
Species: set of individuals who can mate and produce fertile offspring

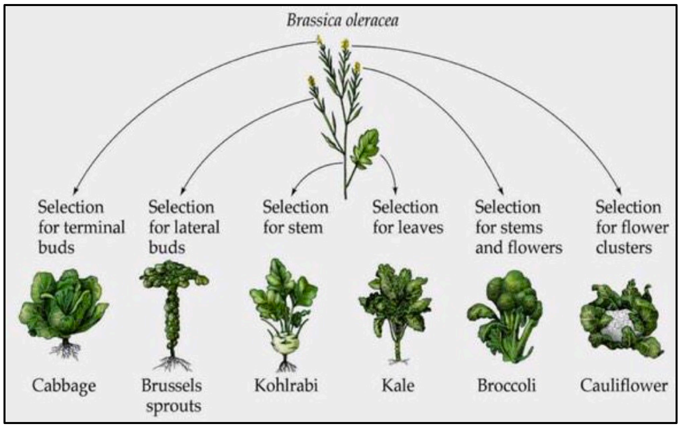
- Biologists have observed & identified 1.9 million species
- Estimated: 8 million to 100 million species
- Unidentified are mostly in rain forests and oceans

A dog and a cat: two different species →

Changing the Genetic Traits of Populations

<u>Artificial selection; i.e. Selective Breeding</u>: All species belong to the same species as the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), yet dogs exist in an amazing variety of shapes, sizes, and behavior types. Dogs remain a single species (*Canis lupus*) and can still mate and breed with on another and produce viable fertile offspring.



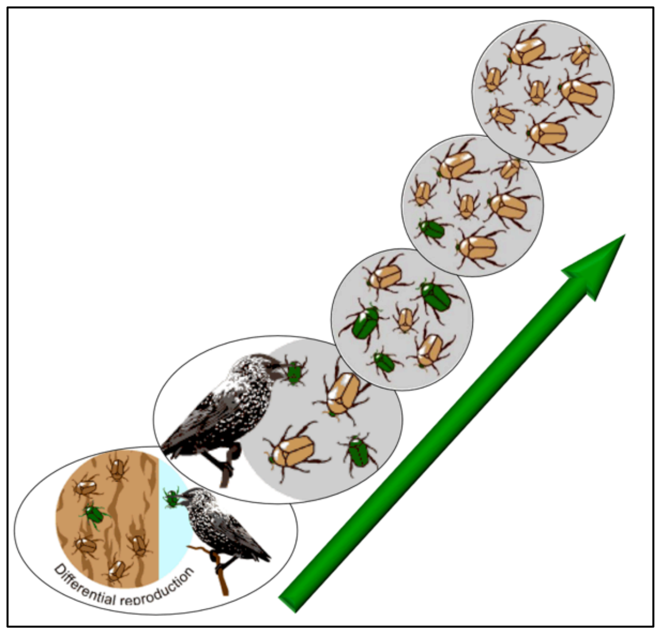


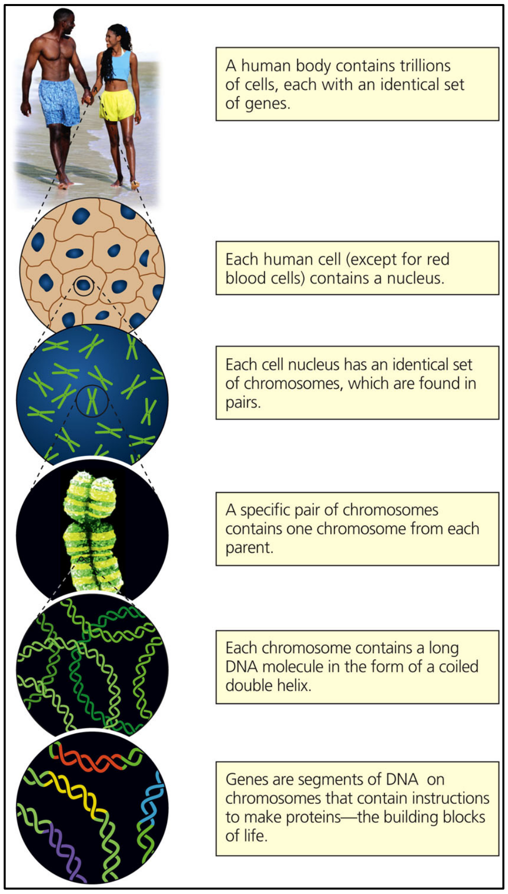
Artificial selection; i.e. Selective Breeding ↑

- Common Garden Experiments: Use selective breeding/crossbreeding; e.g. wild mustard over thousands of years each has been selectively bred for a different trait.

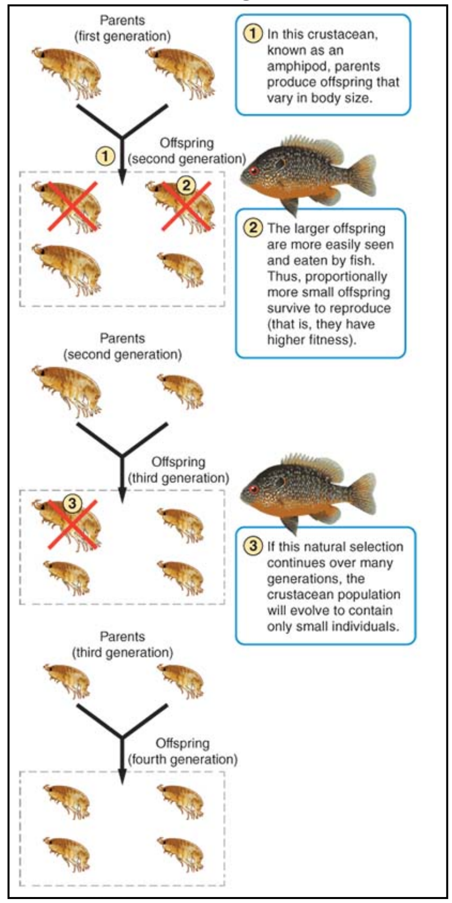
Biological Evolution by Natural Selection Explains How Life Changes over Time

Biological evolution: how earth's life changes over time through changes in the genetic characteristics of populations.
Darwin*: Origin of Species*: Change in populations (not individuals) genetic makeup over successive generations.
Natural selection: individuals with certain traits are more likely to survive and reproduce under a certain set of environmental conditions. Traits are passed to offspring. More advantageous traits allow some organisms to survive and thus have more offspring, and then the trait becomes more common in the population.
Differential reproduction: organisms that are best adapted to a given environment will be most likely to survive to reproductive age and have offspring of their own and therefore the better-adapted organisms will reproduce at a greater rate than the less well-adapted organisms.
Variation in traits: some beetles are green and some are brown (sometimes the result of a mutation).
Differential reproduction: green beetles tend to get eaten by birds and survive to reproduce *less often* than brown beetles.
Heredity: the surviving brown beetles have brown baby beetles because this trait has a genetic basis.
Natural Selection: the more advantageous trait, brown coloration becomes more common in the population. Should this continue, eventually, all individuals in the population will be brown.
Advantageous traits are called adaptations & lead to differential reproduction.





Do the strong survive?



Genetics 101-Understanding How Populations Change

Gene: unit of heritable information located within a specific region of a chromosome (at the molecular/DNA level).

Allele: one of two or more slightly different forms of a given gene.

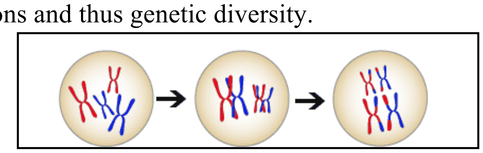
Genotype: a selection of the genes that make up an individual.

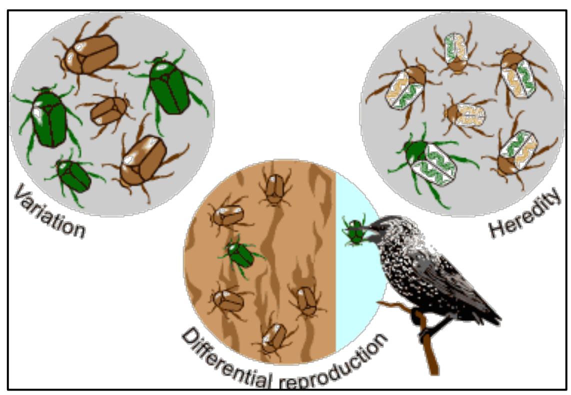
Phenotype: the expression of the genotype

Gene pool: all the genotypes within a population.

Mutation: mistake in copying of genetic code; if mutation in sex cells it is inherited.

Recombination: during cell division part of one chromosome breaks off and attaches to another, which leads to new gene combinations and thus genetic diversity.

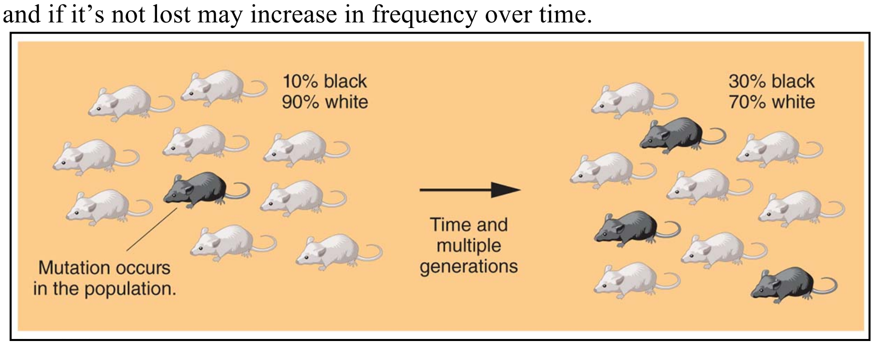




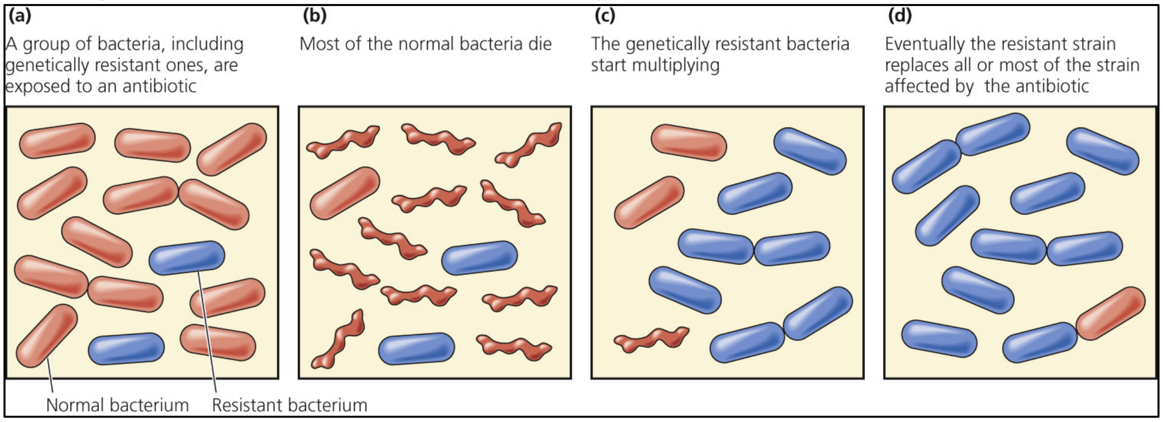
Evolution by Natural Selection

A mutation can arise in a population and if it's not lost may increase in frequency over time.

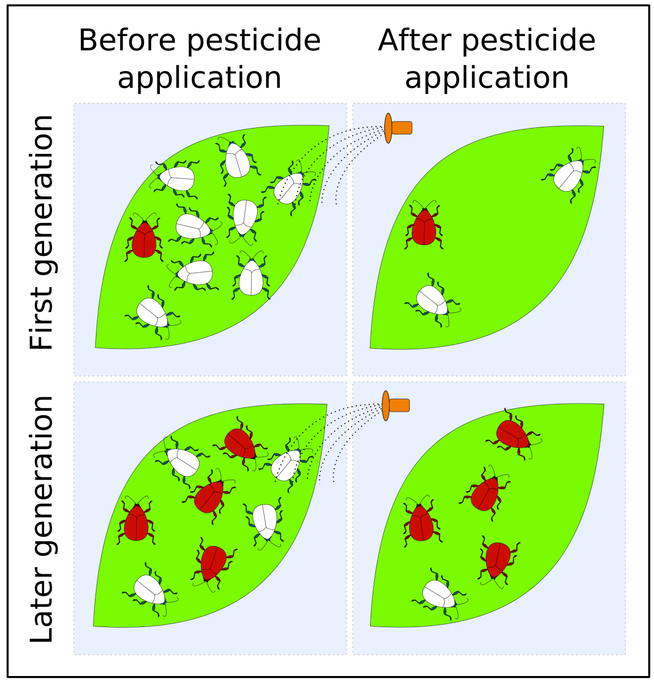
(a) Mutation
A mutation can arise in a population and, if it is not lost, may increase in frequency over time.



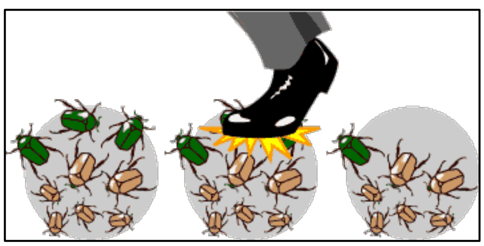
Genetic resistance: ability of one or more members of a population to resist a chemical designed to kill it
Unintended consequence: bacterial resistance to antibacterial drugs



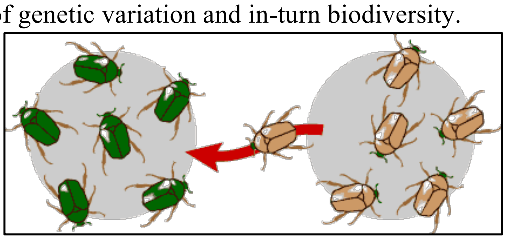
Pesticide Resistance →
Genetic Resistance: ability of one or more organisms in a population to tolerate a chemical designed to kill it.
Unintended consequence: agricultural pesticide/herbicide use often results in the pest population developing resistance pesticide/herbicide. →



Genetic Drift: some individuals may, by chance, leave behind a few more descendants (genes) than other individuals.
The genes of the next generation will be the genes of the "lucky" individuals, not necessarily the healthier or "better" individuals.



Gene Flow: also called migration, is any movement of individuals and their genetic material from one population to another.
If genes are carried to a population where those gene previously did not exist, gene flow can be a very important source of genetic variation and in-turn biodiversity.



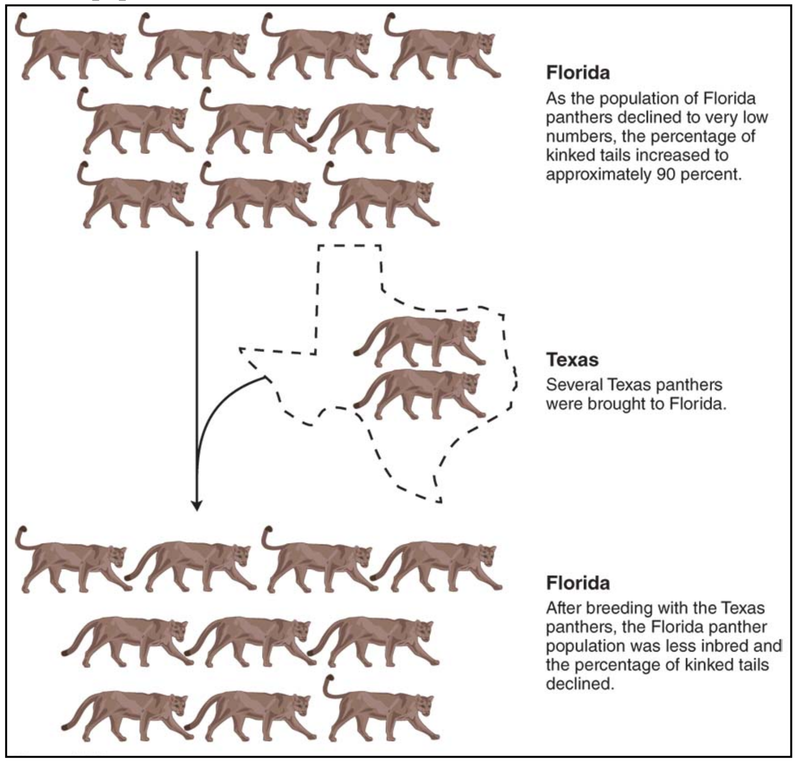
Gene Flow can be helpful in bringing genetic variation to a population that lacks it.

Florida Panther (*Puma concolor*)

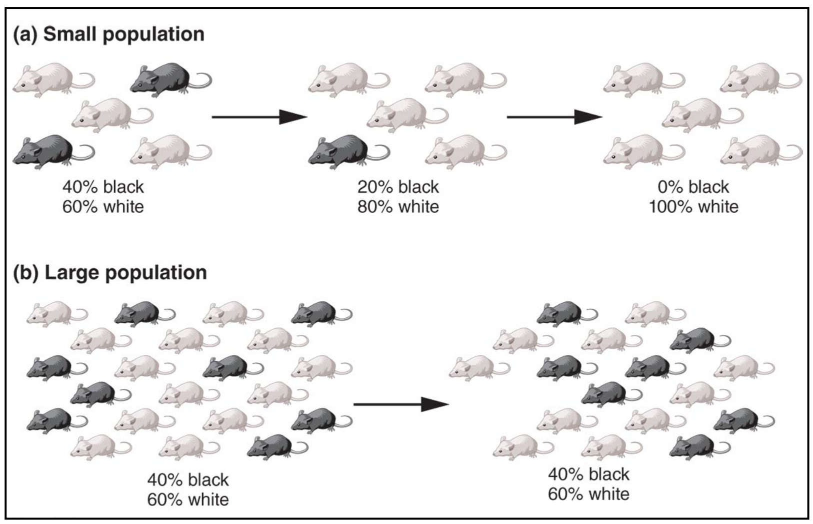
Agriculture, urban development, and interstates highways fragmented panther habitat by 1995 only 5% of original habitat remained; And only about 30 individuals.

Due to inbreeding, a high prevalence of kinked tails, heart defects, and low sperm count existed in the small population.

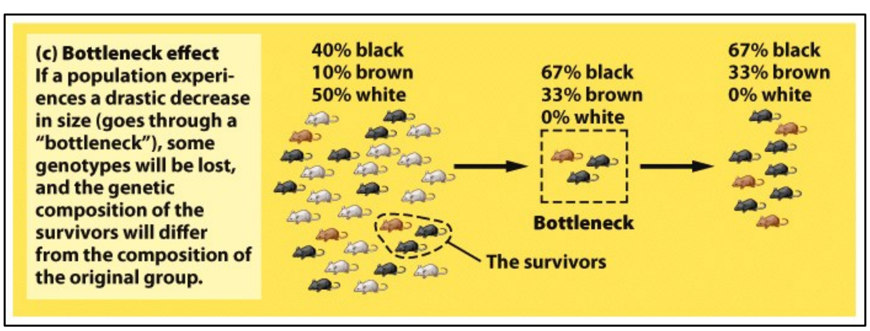
Eight Texas panthers (*Puma concolor*) were introduce to Florida population to increase genetic variation and by 2011 the prevalence of genetic defects have declined and the population has grown to 160 individuals.



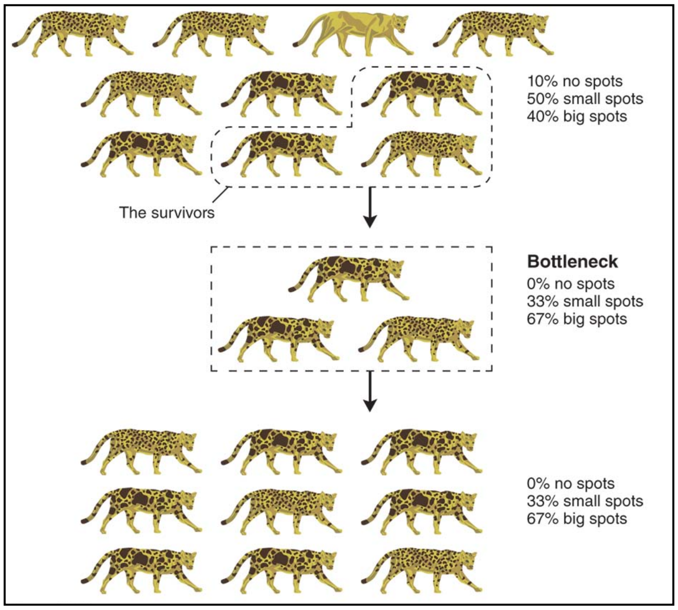
Genetic Drift: (a) In a small population, some less-common genotypes can be lost by chance as random mating among a small number of individuals can result in the less-common genotype not mating. As a result, the genetic composition can change over time. (b) In a large population it is more difficult for the less-common genotypes to be lost by chance because the absolute number of individuals is large. As a result, the genetic composition tends to remain the same over time in larger populations.



Population Bottleneck: an evolutionary event in which a significant percentage of a population or species is killed or otherwise prevented from reproducing; some genotypes will be lost and genetic composition of survivors will differ from original group.

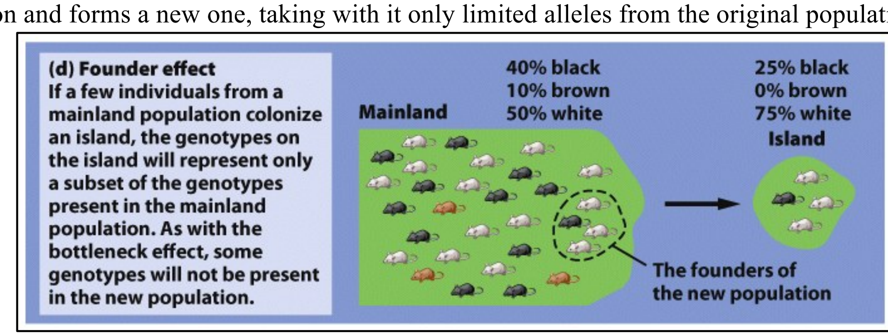


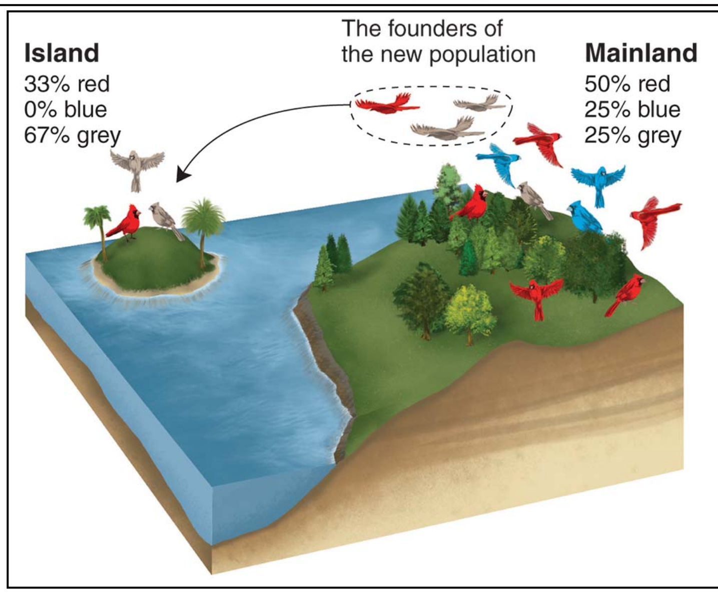
Population Bottleneck



The Founder Effect

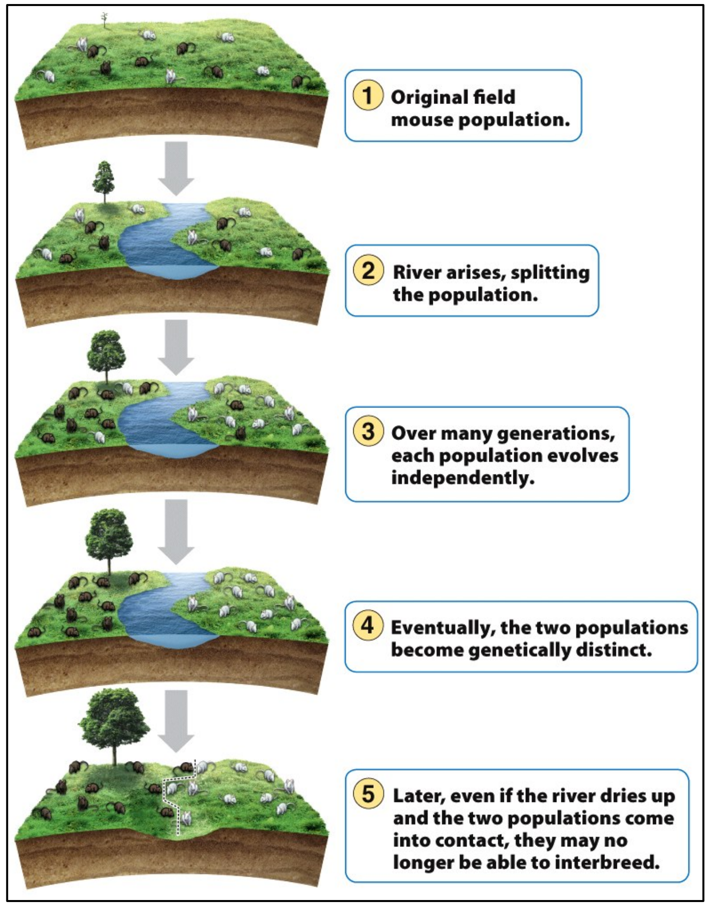
The founder effect is a special case of a population bottleneck, occurring when a small group in a population splinters off from the original population and forms a new one, taking with it only limited alleles from the original population.



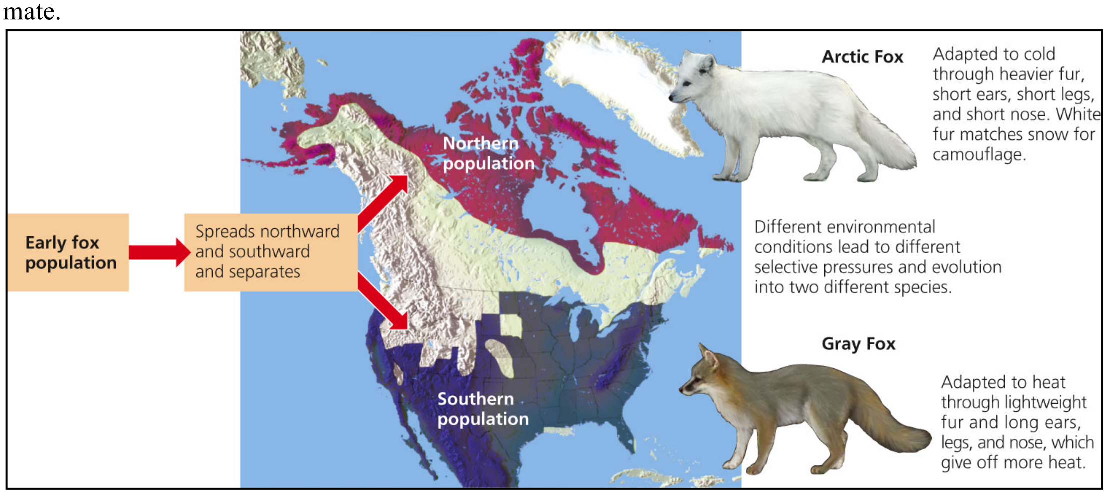


Note: *a limitation to adaptation through natural selection is that the ability to adapt is limited by reproductive capacity (rate)*

How Do New Species Evolve?
Speciation: one species splits into two or more species



Geographic Isolation Can Lead to Reproductive Isolation
Geographic isolation: happens first; groups from same population become physically isolated for a long period of time.
Reproductive isolation: populations of organisms become geographically isolated leading and become so genetically different they cannot mate.

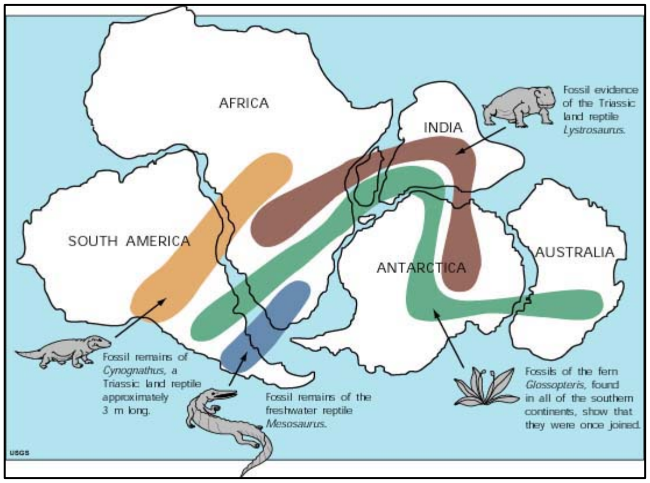


Geologic Processes, Climate Change, & Catastrophes Affect Natural Selection

Tectonic plates affect evolution and the location of life on earth by determining the location of continents and ocean basins.

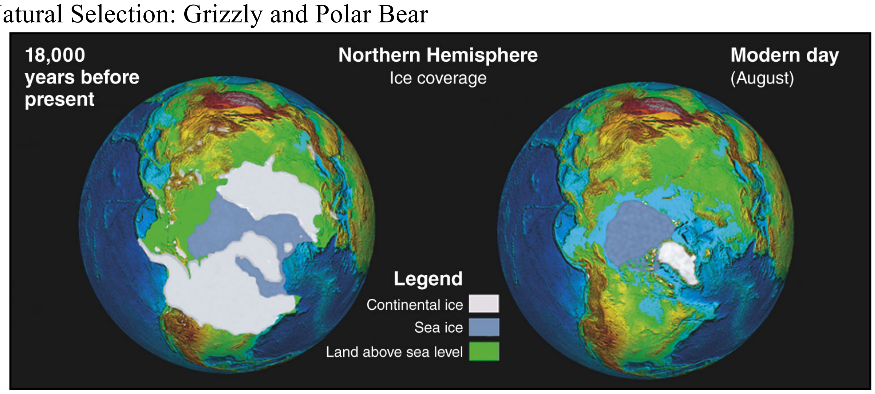
- Location/latitude of continents determines climate and thus where plants and animals live
- Movement of continents has allowed species to move, adapt to new climates and form new species through natural selection

225 million years ago



Present

Volcanic Eruptions: Mt. Saint Helens: Destroy habitat and wipe out populations
Earthquakes: create fissures that separate and isolate populations
Climate Change and Natural Selection: Grizzly and Polar Bear

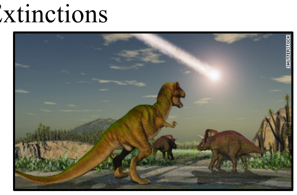


These hybrid cubs above are Pizzly bears, which are the product of a Polar bear dad, Grizzly mom.
When hybrids such as these are capable of having fertile offspring, speciation will occur. →

Divergence: One species becomes two; e.g. Arctic Fox
Convergence: The evolution of species from different taxonomic groups toward a similar form; e.g. potentially grizzly & polar bear

Collisions between the earth and large asteroids

- New species
- Extinctions



Extinction is Forever

Extinction

- Biological extinction
- Local extinction

Endemic species

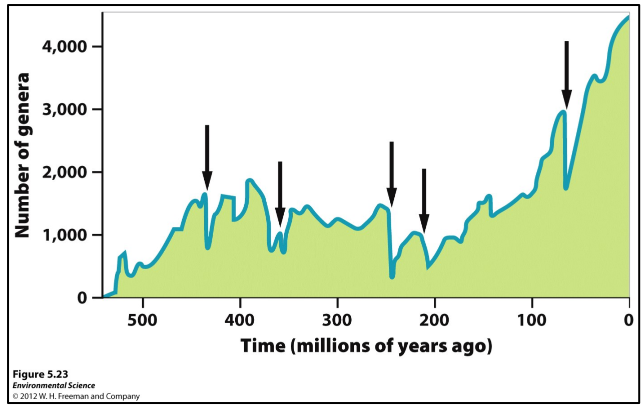
- Found only in one area
- Particularly vulnerable

Background extinction: typical low rate of extinction

Mass extinction: 3-5 over 500 million years

Extinction and speciation are mechanisms of biodiversity

Golden Toad of Costa Rica, Extinct



<u>Part 2 — Species Diversity</u>

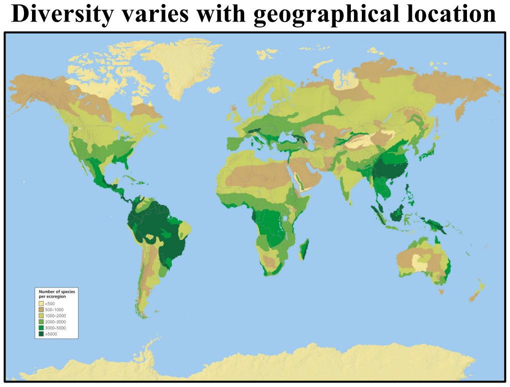
Species Diversity

The most species-rich communities

- Tropical rain forests
- Coral reefs
- Ocean bottom zone
- Large tropical lakes

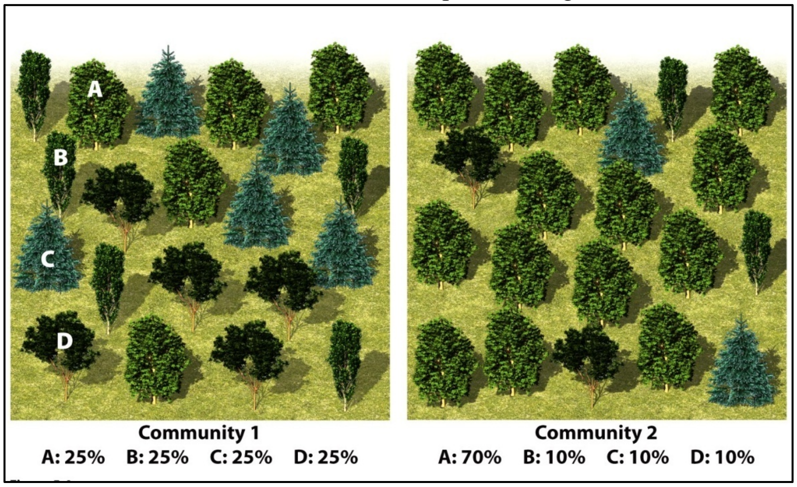
Species richness seems to increase productivity and stability or sustainability, and provide insurance against catastrophe

Diversity varies with geographical location



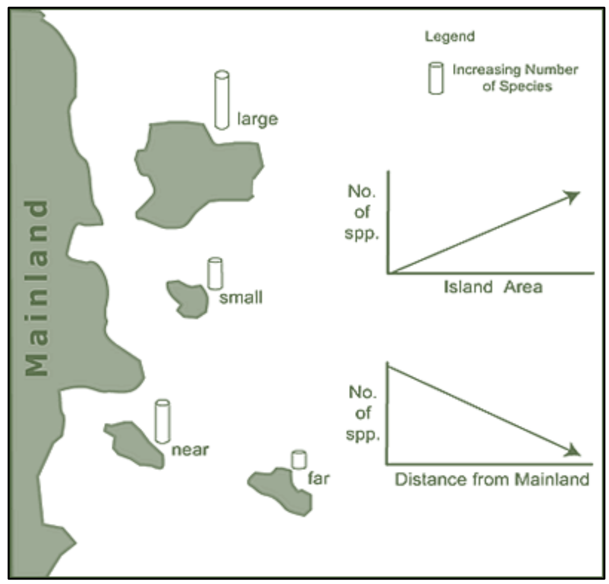
Types of Species Diversity
Species richness:
- The number of different species in a given area

Species evenness:
- The relative proportion of individuals within the different species in a given area



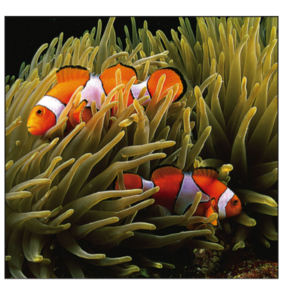
Theory of Island Biogeography
Diversity varies with geographical location
Number of types of species influenced by size & distance from mainland
- **Size**: larger habitats have more species
- **Distance**: Closer to mainland and or other habitat = more species

First observed & reported by Edward O. Wilson
Theory of island biogeography;
a.k.a. Species equilibrium model: rate of new species immigrating should balance with the rate of species extinction



<u>Part 3 — Ecosystem Structure: Species Interaction</u>
<u>Five Types of Species Interaction</u>
- Interspecific Competition
- Predation
- Parasitism
- Mutualism
- Commensalism




Most Consumer Species Feed on Live Organisms of Other Species

Predators may capture prey by

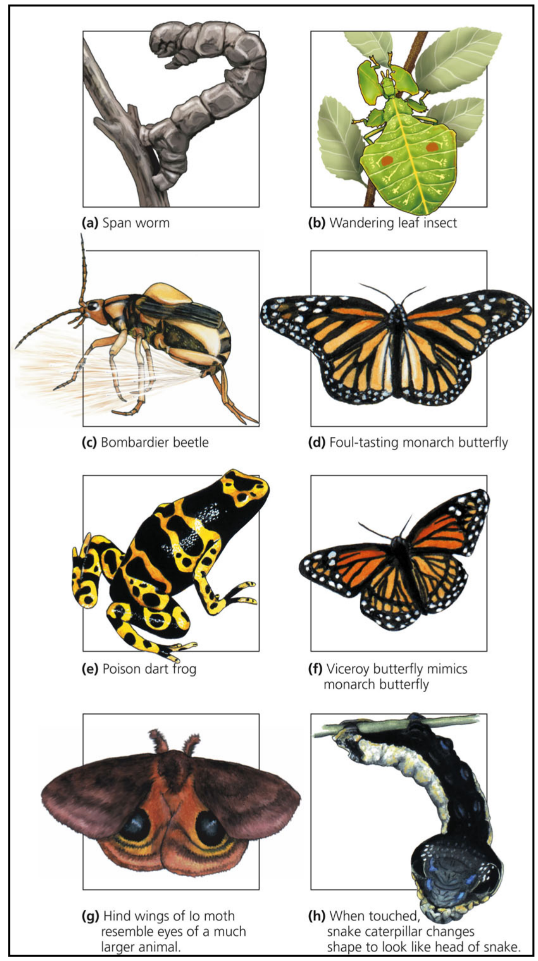
1. Walking
2. Swimming
3. Flying
4. Pursuit and ambush
5. Camouflage
6. Chemical warfare

Predator-Prey Relationships →

Prey may avoid capture by

1. Run, swim, fly
2. Protection: shells, bark, thorns
3. Camouflage
4. Chemical warfare
5. Warning coloration
6. Mimicry
7. Deceptive looks
8. Deceptive behavior

Some ways prey species avoid their predators →



Parasitism

Some species feed off other species by living on or in them

- Parasite is usually much smaller than the host
- Parasite rarely kills the host
- Parasite-host interaction may lead to coevolution
- Ex. Sea lampreys prey on most species of large Great Lakes fish.

Mutualism

In some interactions, both species benefit

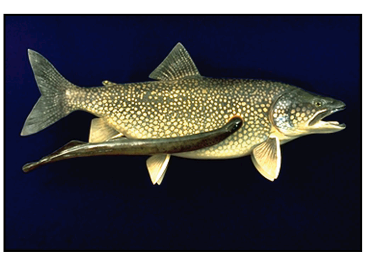
- Nutrition and protection relationship
- Ex. Plant pollinator relationships
- Ex. Gut inhabitant mutualism
- Ex. Coral reefs (algae & polyps)
- Ex. Lichen (algae & fungus)
- Not cooperation: it's mutual exploitation

Commensalism

In some interactions, one species benefits and the other is not harmed

- Epiphytes: Bromeliads
- Birds nesting in trees

Parasitism



Mutualism

Commensalism

Mutualism: Anemone & Clownfish

Sea Anemones are predators that attach themselves to rocks or coral. There, they sit and wait until a fish swims close enough to attack with its tentacles. When a fish swims by the anemone, its tentacles will shoot out a long poisonous thread. The toxins in this thread paralyze the prey.

Clownfish are one of the only species that can survive the deadly sting of the Sea Anemone. By making the anemone their home, clownfish become immune to its sting. These fish will gently touch every part of their bodies to the anemone's tentacles until it no longer affects them. A layer of mucus then forms on the clownfish's body to prevent it from getting stung again.

Relationship: Mutualism

"A **sea anemone** makes an ideal home for a clownfish. Its poisonous tentacles provide protection from predators and a clownfish makes its meals from the anemone's leftovers."

"A **clownfish** can help an anemone catch its prey by luring other fish toward over so that the anemone can catch them. Clownfish also eat any dead tentacles keeping the anemone and the area around it clean. "

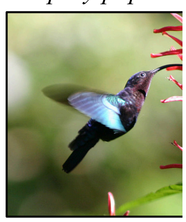
Predator and Prey Interactions Can Drive Each Other's Evolution

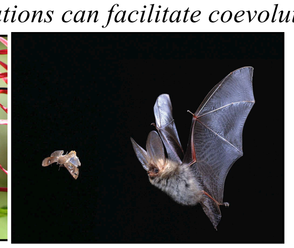
Intense natural selection pressures between predator & prey populations can facilitate coevolution.

<u>Coevolution</u>

Interact over a long period of time

- Plants and their pollinators
- Bats and moths: echolocation of bats and sensitive hearing of moths



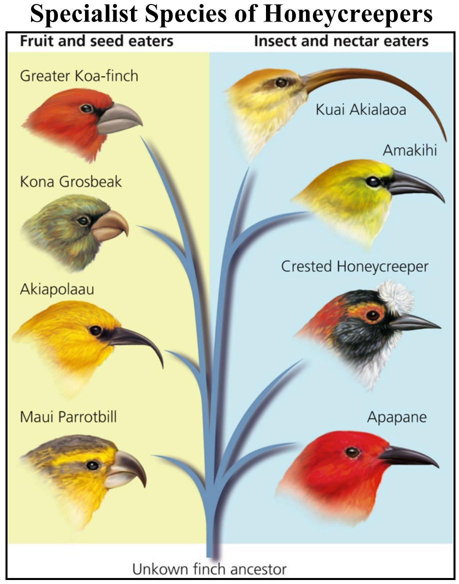


Central American Acacia species:

- Hollow thorns and pores at the bases of their leaves secrete nectar
- Hollow thorns are exclusive nest-site of some species of ant that drink the nectar
- Ants drink nectar and in turn defend the acacia plant against herbivores

Coevolution: plants would not have evolved hollow thorns or nectar pores unless their evolution had been affected by the ants, and the ants would not have evolved herbivore defense behaviors unless their evolution had been affected by the plants. →

Specialist Species of Honeycreepers



Species Can Play Five Major Roles within Ecosystems

- Native species
- Nonnative species
- Indicator species
- Keystone species
- Foundation species

Keystone species: plant or animal that plays a unique and crucial role in the way an ecosystem functions; Alter habitat or have a niche that supports other populations. There disappearance would start a domino effect. Ex. pollinators & top predators

<u>**Examples**</u>

Pollinators: keystone species in most terrestrial ecosystems.

- Provide essential ecological services.
- Necessary for the reproduction of over 2/3 of the world's crop species.

Top Predators: American alligator are a keystone species in wetland ecosystems.

- Digs holes that hold freshwater during dry spells
- Serve as refuges for aquatic life and provide fresh water

Southern Sea Otters & Marine Ecosystems

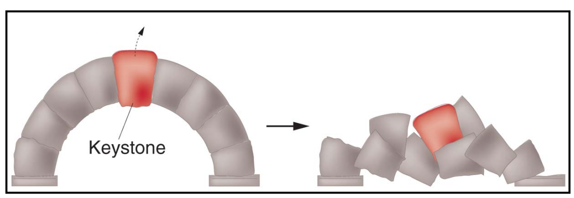
Keystone species

Southern sea otters eat sea urchins that eat kelp; there regulating sea urchin populations and maintaining kelp forests

- Habitat- California coast between Santa Cruz & Santa Barbara
- Hunted: early 1900s; then partial recovery
  - Protected: Endangered Species Act 1977

Woodpeckers: Keystone Species Complex

Species in a Colorado subalpine ecosystem show subtle interdependences. Red-naped sapsuckers play two distinct keystone roles. They excavate nest cavities in fungus infected aspens that are required as nest sites by two species of swallows, and they drill sap wells into willows that provide abundant nourishment for themselves, humming birds, orange crowned warblers, chipmunks, and an array of other sap robbers. The swallows thus depend on, and the sap robbers benefit from, a keystone species complex comprised of sapsuckers, willows, aspens, and a heartwood fungus. Disappearance of any element of the complex could cause an unanticipated unraveling of the community.



Foundation Species Help to Form the Bases of Ecosystems

Create or enhance their habitats, which benefit others

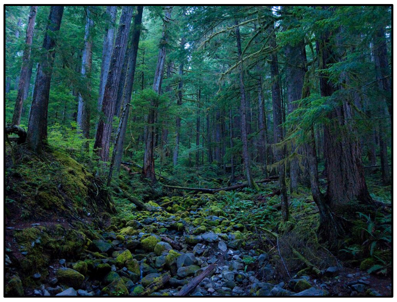
Beaver: build a dam that creates a pond where other organisms live.

Bat and bird species: regenerate deforested areas and spread fruit plants in their droppings.

Wolves: Predators that keep herbivore population in check so as not to destroy grazing land.

Dominant Trees Can Be Foundation Species

Eastern Hemlock



Douglas Fir

<u>Indicator species</u>

- Provide early warning of damage to a community
- Indicator species serve as biological smoke alarms
- Can be used monitor environmental quality
    - ➢ Trout
    - ➢ Birds
    - ➢ Butterflies
    - ➢ Frogs

Sensitive to habitat Loss, increases in UV, parasites, pollution (pesticides), climate change, overhunting, etc...

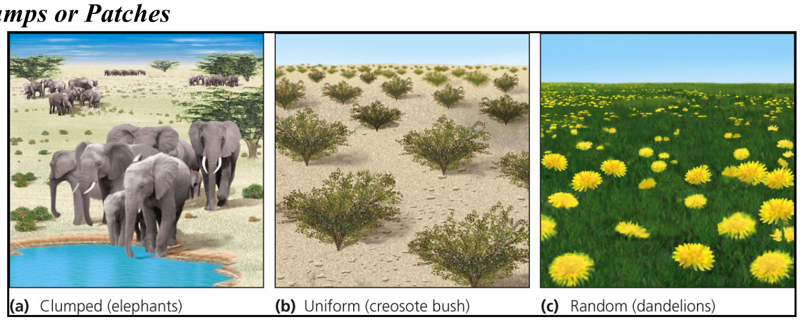
<u>Part 4 — Population Ecology</u>

Population Abundance and Distribution

Most Populations Live Together in Clumps or Patches

Population distribution

1. Clumping
2. Uniform dispersion
3. Random dispersion



Generalized Dispersion Patterns

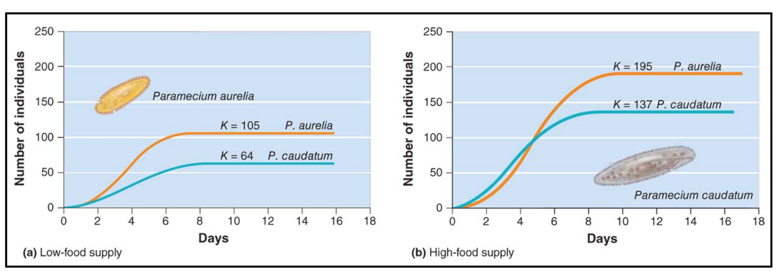
Some Factors Can Limit Population Size

Limiting factor principle

Too much or too little of any physical or chemical factor can limit or prevent growth of a population, even if all other factors are at or near the optimal range of tolerance.

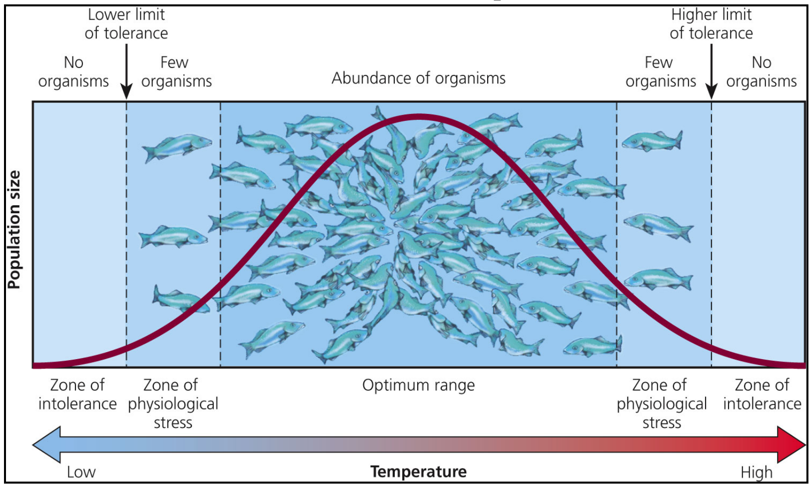
Size of populations controlled by limiting factors:

- Light (sunlight)
- Water (precipitation)
- Space
- Nutrients
- Exposure to too many competitors, predators or infectious diseases

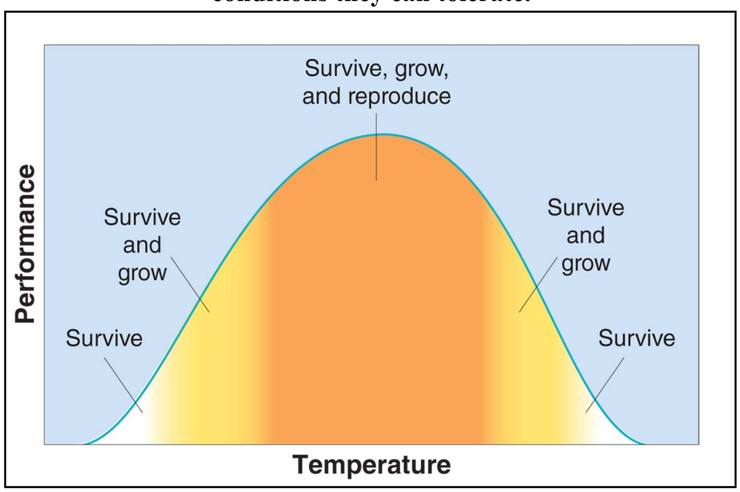


Range of tolerance: Variations in physical and chemical environment

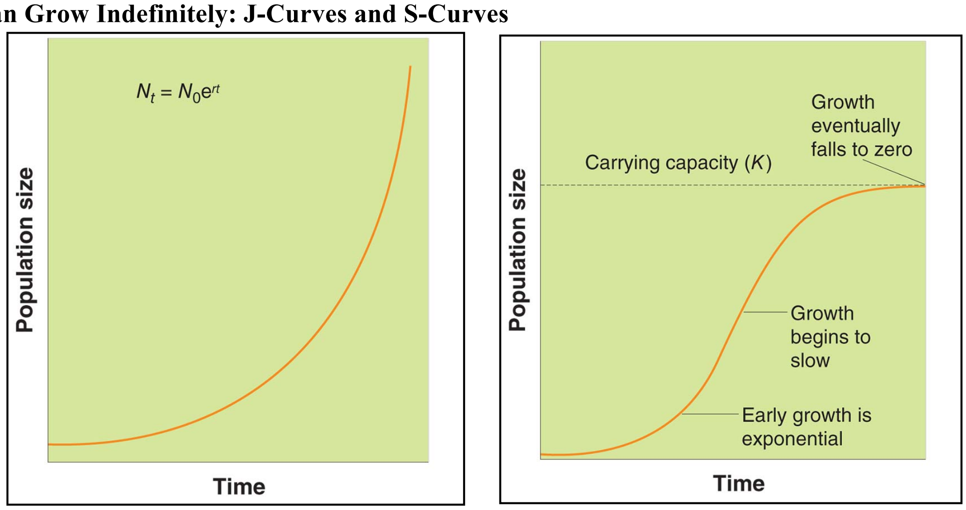
Trout Tolerance of Temperature



All species has an optimal environment in which it performs particularly well-a range of tolerance or limit to abiotic conditions they can tolerate.



No Population Can Grow Indefinitely: J-Curves and S-Curves



Population growth is affected by biotic or intrinsic factors that are built into the genetic basis of each species.

Biotic potential (i.e. intrinsic growth): the maximum size a population would get it there were nothing holding it back.

Environmental resistance

- All factors that act to limit the growth of a population

Carrying capacity (K)

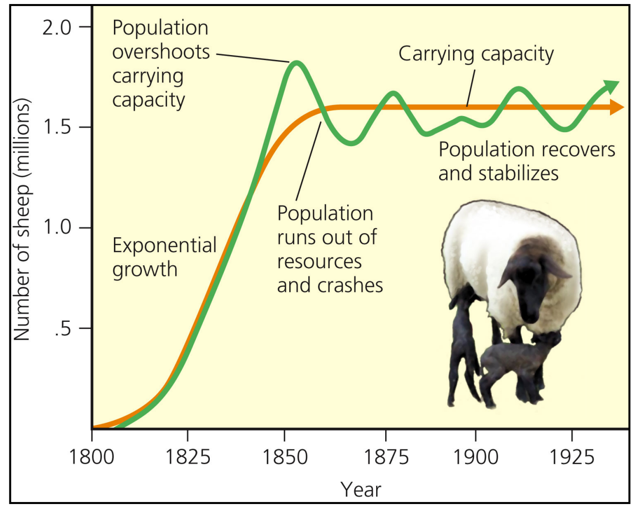
- Maximum population a given habitat can sustain

Exponential growth

Starts slowly, then accelerates to carrying capacity when meets environmental resistance

Logistic growth

Decreased population growth rate as population size reaches carrying capacity

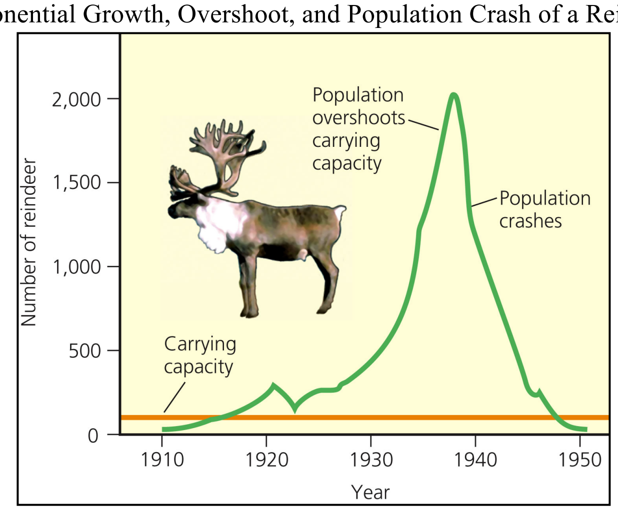


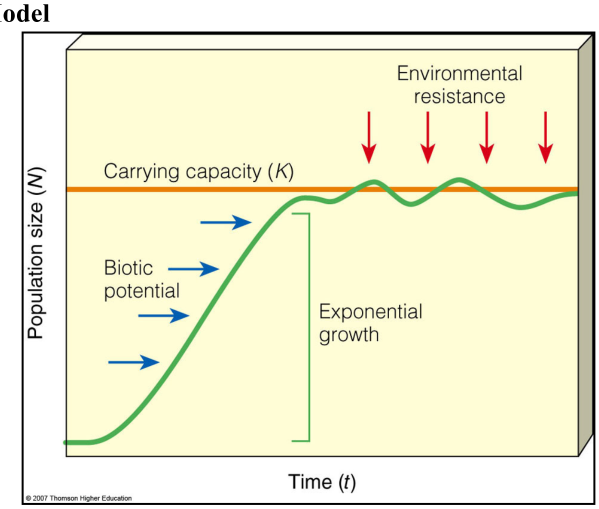
Population growth is affected by biotic or intrinsic factors that are built into the genetic basis of each species.

Biotic potential: the maximum size a population would get it there were nothing holding it back.

Logistic Growth Model

Exponential Growth, Overshoot, and Population Crash of a Reindeer





Together, biotic potential & environmental resistance determine carrying capacity (*K*)

Environmental Resistance + Biotic Potential = Carrying Capacity

Some populations will overshoot *K*, there will be a lack of resources and the population will experience a die-off/crash.

When a Population Exceeds Its Habitat's Carrying Capacity, Its Population Can Crash

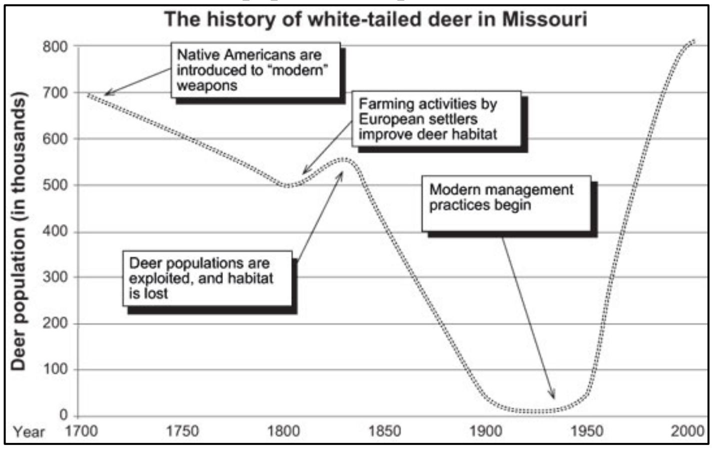
- Reproductive time lag may lead to overshoot then Population crash
- Damage may reduce area's carrying capacity

Exploding White-Tailed Deer Population in the U.S.

- 1900: deer habitat destruction and uncontrolled hunting
- 1920s–1930s: laws to protect the deer

+ Removal of natural predators

Current population explosion for deer



Some Factors Can Limit Population Size

Limiting Factors/Environmental Resistance Factors

Density Dependent Factors: Influence an individuals probability of survival and reproduction in a manner that depends on the size of the population

Ex. Competition, space, resources, predation, disease, parasitism

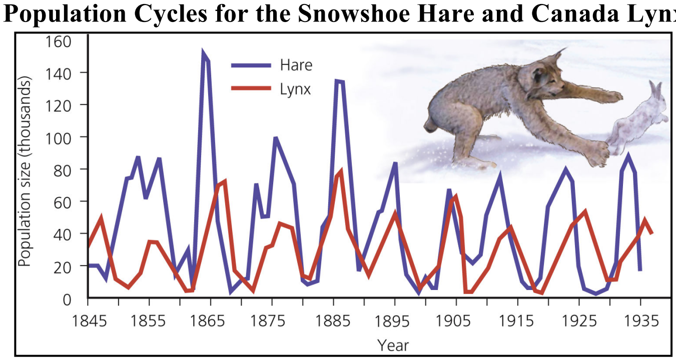
Density Independent Factors: have same effect on an individual's probability of survival

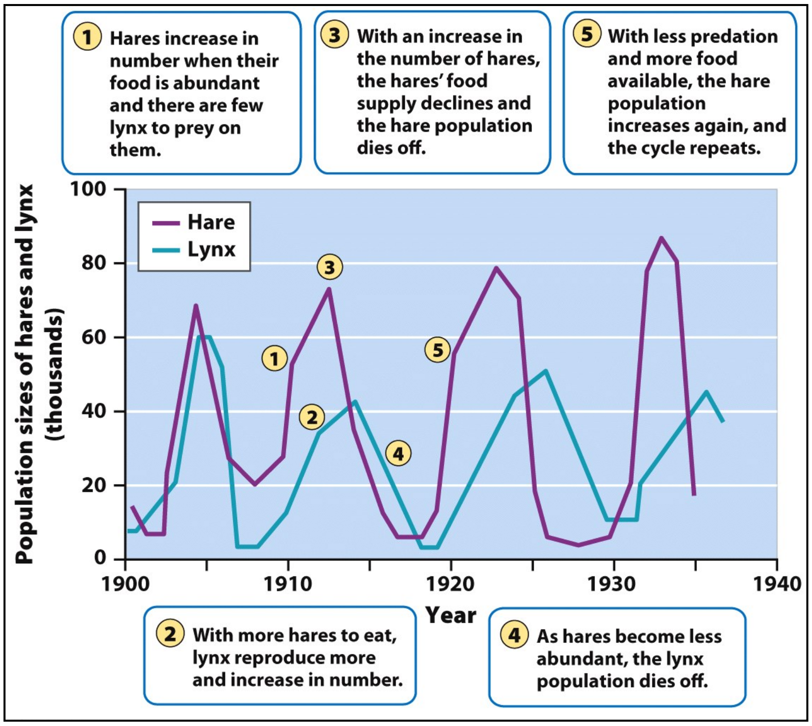
Ex. fire, drought, hurricane, pest spraying

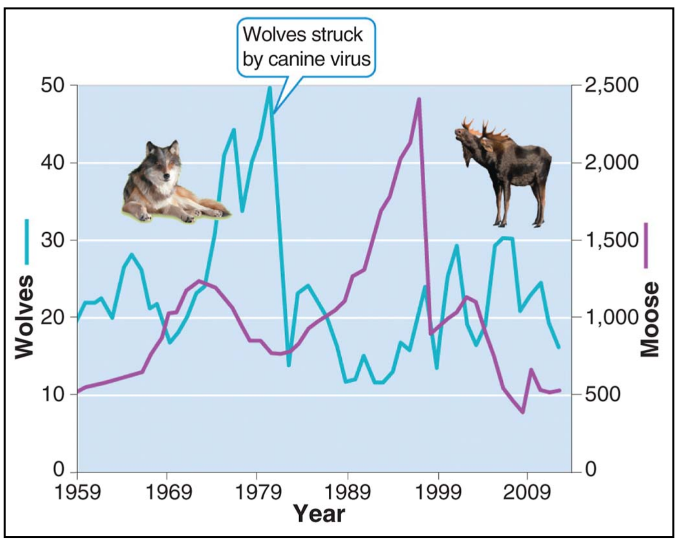
Types of Population Change in Nature

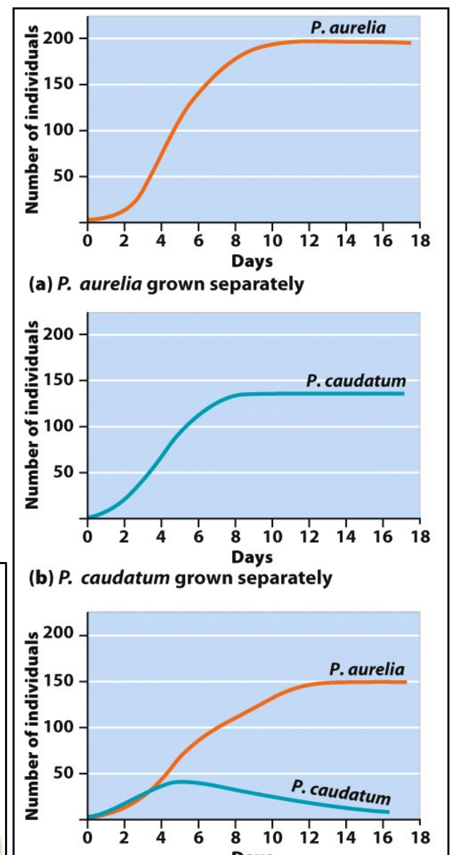
- Stable
- Irruptive
  - Population surge, followed by crash
- Cyclic fluctuations, boom-and-bust cycles
  - Top-down population regulation
  - Bottom-up population regulation
- Irregular

Population Cycles for the Snowshoe Hare and Canada Lynx







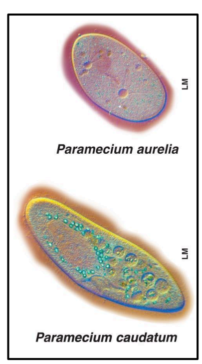


(a) *P. aurelia* grown separately

(b) *P. caudatum* grown separately

(c) *P. aurelia* and *P. caudatum* grown together

Species Interactions
Competition: Struggle of individuals to obtain a limited resource
Interspecific competition: competition in which individuals of different species compete for the same resource in an ecosystem (e.g. food or living space).
Intraspecific competition: organisms of the same species.
Competitive Exclusion Principle: Two species competing for same limited resource cannot coexist. →

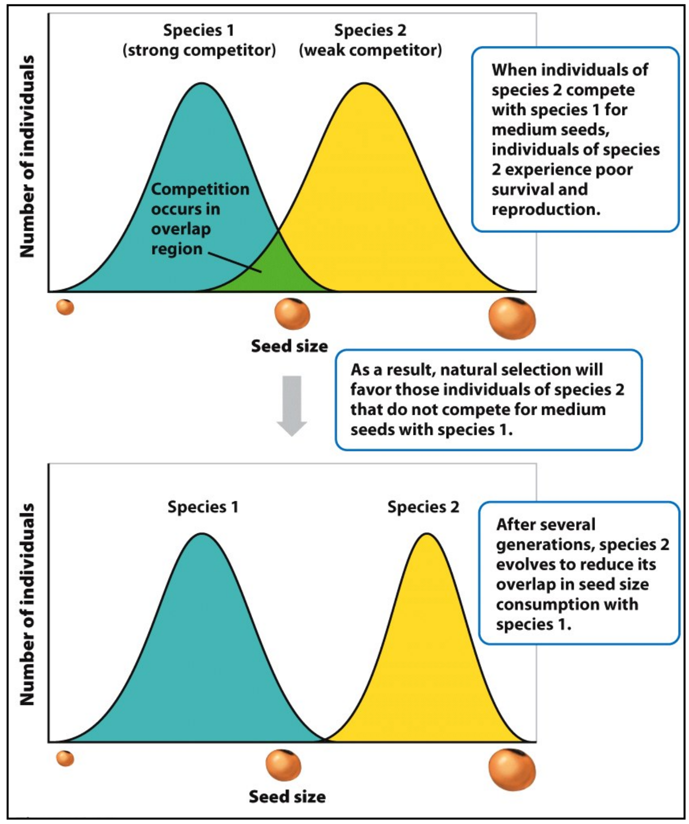


Paramecium aurelia

Paramecium caudatum

Most Species Compete with One Another for Certain Resources

- For limited resources
- Ecological niche for exploiting resources
- Some niches overlap
- Niche differentiation
  - Resource partitioning



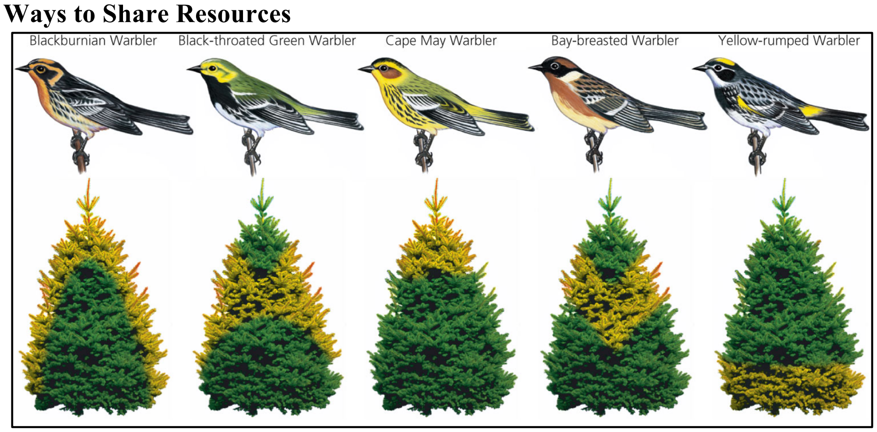
Three Types of Resource Partitioning

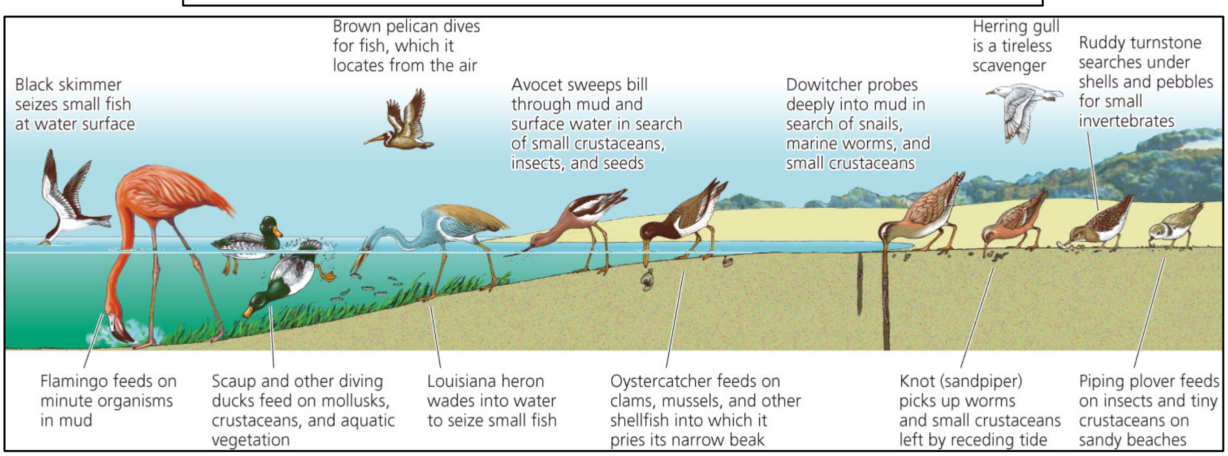
1. Temporal; e.g. wolves & coyotes that shear same space hunt at different times of day; plants flower at different times of year.
2. Spatial; e.g. birds use different parts of same tree.
3. Morphological; e.g. Darwin's finches beaks adapted to different foods.

Resource partitioning

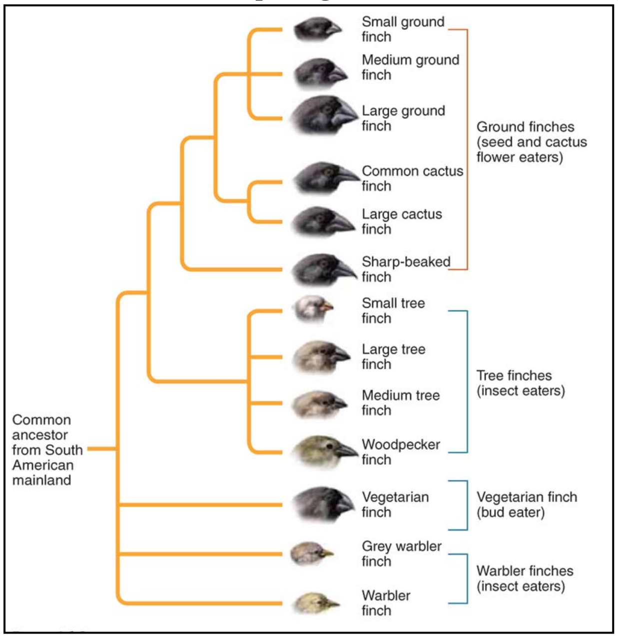
- Using only parts of resource
- Using at different times
- Using in different ways

Some Species Evolve Ways to Share Resources

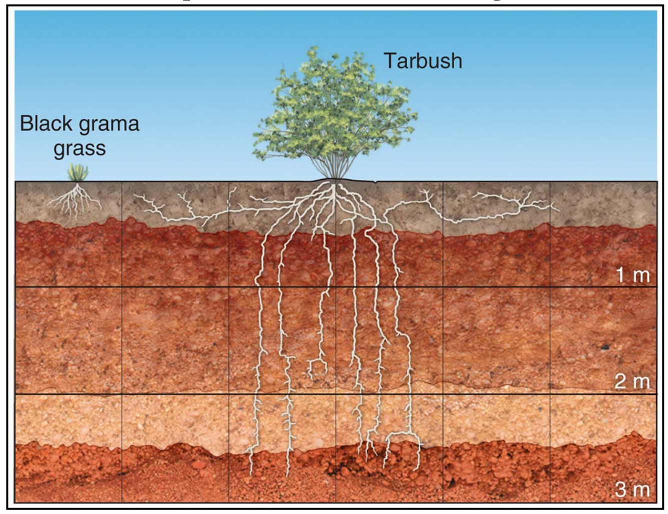




Darwin's Finches- Morphological Resource Partitioning



Spatial Resource Partitioning



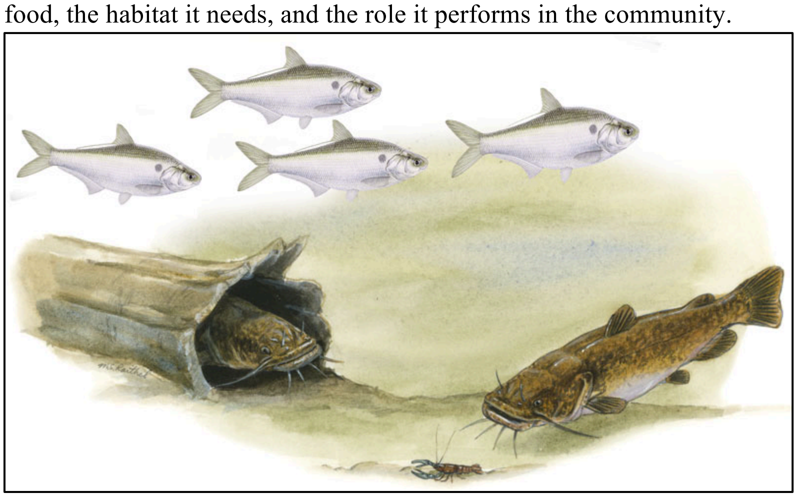
Ecological Niche

An organism's pattern of living (way of life); Each species fits into an ecological community in its own special way and has its own tolerable ranges for many environmental factors; Everything that affects survival and reproduction.

- Water, space, sunlight, food, temperatures
- Includes adaptations acquired through evolution

For example, a fish species' niche might be defined partly by ranges of salinity (saltiness), pH (acidity), and temperature it can tolerate, as well as the types of food it can eat.

Within a community every species has a particular niche. A species' niche defines how a species fits into its environment. It includes its way of getting food, the habitat it needs, and the role it performs in the community.

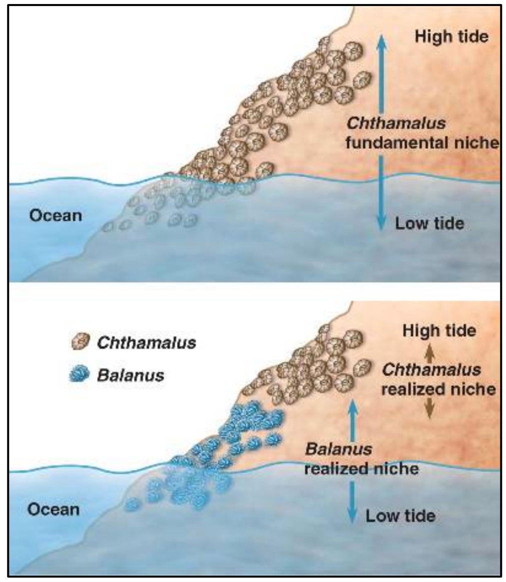


Flathead catfish can live in the same reservoir with gizzard shad because they don't compete for the same niche.

Gizzard shad eat plankton and spawn over gravel and grass, broadcasting their eggs, which sink and adhere to any underwater substrate. When they are small, flathead catfish eat invertebrates, such as worms, insects, and crayfish. But once the flatheads grow large enough they begin to prey on live fish. They spawn in sheltered areas on the lake bottom, such as cavities in logs, undercut banks, and rocks. Flathead catfish males guard the eggs. Once hatched the fry remain on the nest for about a week, still guarded by the male.

Principle of competitive exclusion

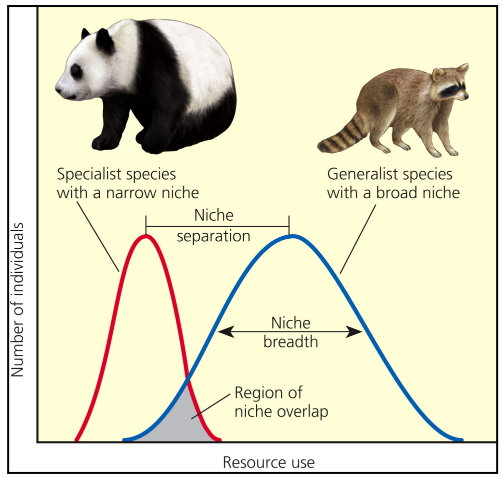
- Chthalamus barnacles can live in both deep and shallow intertidal zones (*fundamental niche*).
- Competition from Balanus forces Chthalamus to occupy a smaller *realized niche* on higher, drier habitat.



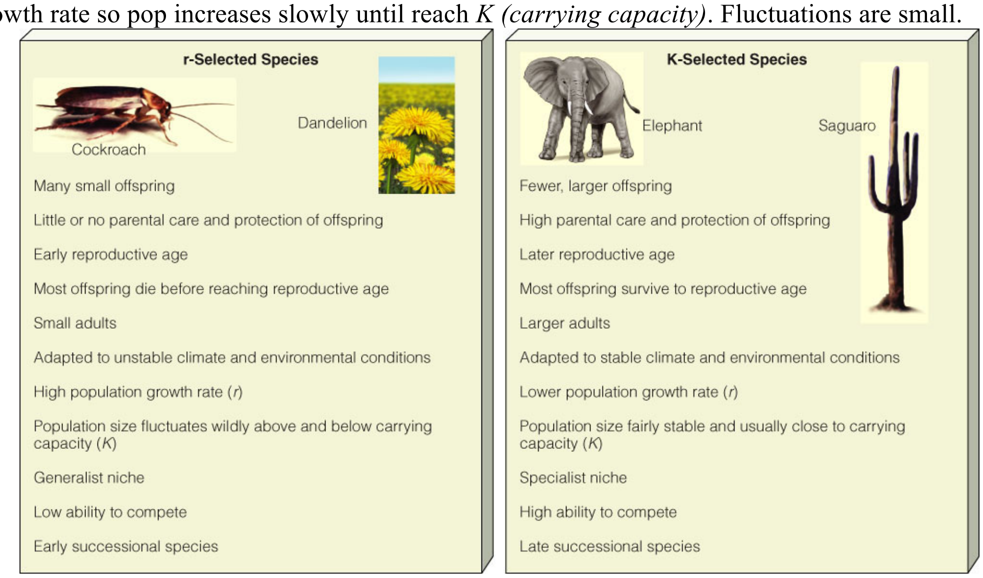
Fundamental Niche: Full potential range of conditions if there were no competition
Realized Niche: The portion of niche fulfilled due to competition or other species interactions

Ecological Niche: Each Species Plays a Unique Role in Its Ecosystem
A generalist species: Broad Niches able to thrive in a wide variety of environmental conditions and can make use of a variety of different resources (*r*-strategist)
A specialist species: Narrow Niches can only thrive in a narrow range of environmental conditions or has a limited diet. Often prone to extinction. (K-Strategist)
Ex. Cockroaches are generalists (*r*-strategist)

- Eat almost anything
- Live in almost any climate
- High reproductive rates



Species Have Different Reproductive Strategies
r **strategists (*r*-selected species)**
High intrinsic growth rate because they reproduce often and produce large number of off spring. Populations do not typically remain near *K*, but exhibit rapid growth followed by overshoots and die-offs
K strategists (K-selected species)
Low intrinsic growth rate so pop increases slowly until reach *K (carrying capacity)*. Fluctuations are small.



K-selected species

- Reproduce later in life
- Small number of offspring with long life spans
- Young offspring grow inside mother
- Long time to maturity
- Protected by parents, and potentially groups
- Large mammals and birds
- Humans, elephants, whales

***r*-selected species**

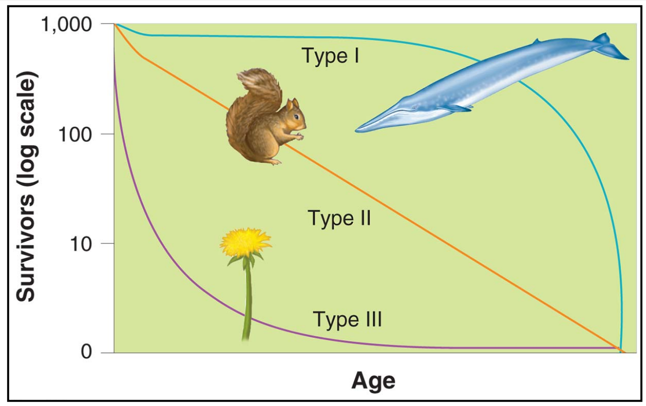
- Many, usually small, offspring
- Little or no parental care
- Massive deaths of offspring
- Insects, bacteria, algae—cockroaches, dandelions, rats, etc.

TABLE 19.1 Traits of *K*-selected and *r*-selected species

Trait	*K*-selected species	*r*-selected species
Life span	Long	Short
Time to reproductive maturity	Long	Short
Number of reproductive events	Few	Many
Number of offspring	Few	Many
Size of offspring	Large	Small
Parental care	Present	Absent
Population growth rate	Slow	Fast
Population regulation	Density dependent	Density independent
Population dynamics	Stable, near carrying capacity	Highly variable

Survivorship Curves

Different species have distinct patterns of survivorship over the life span. Species range from exhibiting excellent survivorship until old age (type I curve) to exhibiting a relatively constant decline in survivorship over time (type II curve) to having very low rates of survivorship early in life (type III curve). *K*-selected species tend to exhibit type I curves, whereas *r*-selected species to exhibit type III curves.



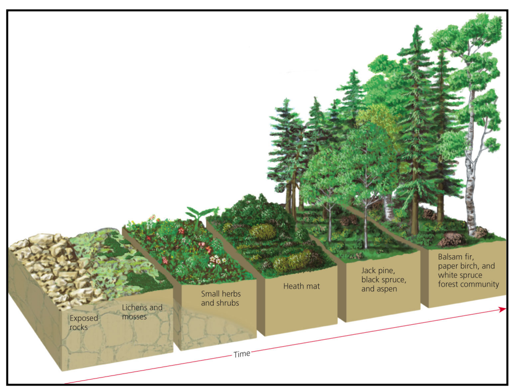
<u>Part 5 — Ecological Succession</u>

Communities and Ecosystems Change over Time: Ecological Succession

Ecological Succession is natural ecological restoration

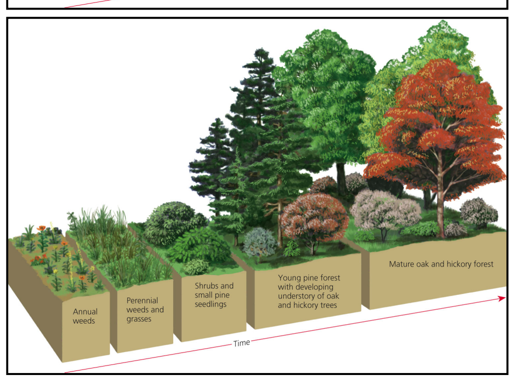
Primary succession

– No soil in a terrestrial system
– No bottom sediment in an aquatic system
– Takes hundreds to thousands of years
– Need to build up soils/sediments to provide necessary nutrients



Secondary succession

- Some soil remains in a terrestrial system
  - Some bottom sediment remains in an aquatic system
  - Ecosystem has been
    - Disturbed
    - Removed
    - Destroyed



Some Ecosystems Do Not Have to Start from Scratch: Secondary Succession

Primary and secondary succession

- Tend to increase biodiversity
- Increase species richness and interactions among species

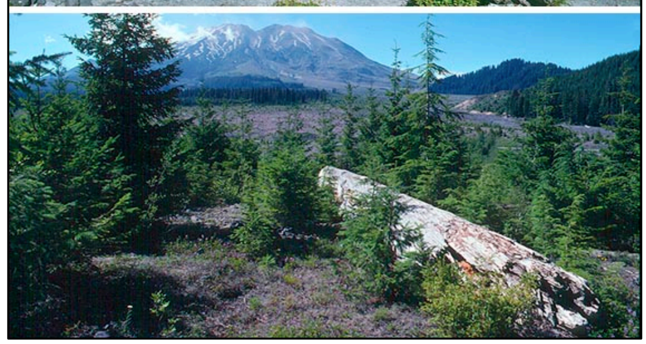
Primary and secondary succession can be interrupted by

- Fires
- Hurricanes
- Clear-cutting of forests
- Plowing of grasslands
- Invasion by nonnative species

Mt. Saint Helens: One of the most violent natural disasters of our time, the colossal eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980 blasted away an entire mountainside. Over 200 square miles of pristine forest were buried under millions of tons of lava, ash, mud, and avalanche debris.

3-years after the eruption →

20-years after the eruption →



Inertia, persistence

Ability of a living system to survive moderate disturbances

Resilience

Ability of a living system to be restored through secondary succession after a moderate disturbance

Some systems have one property, but not the other:

Tropical rain forests: high inertia/low resilience; Tropical rainforests have high species richness and high inertia and thus are resistant to change. But once a large tract of tropical rainforest is cleared, the resilience of the resulting degraded forest ecosystem is so low that it reaches an ecological tipping point and may succeed to tropical grassland; an irreversible change.

Grasslands: high resilience/low inertia; Grasslands are much less diverse than most forests, and consequently they have low inertia and can burn easily. However, because most of their plant matter is stored in underground roots, these ecosystems have high resilience and can recover quickly after a fire, as their root systems produce new grasses.

Facilitation: One set of species makes an area suitable for species with different niche requirements, but less suitable for itself; e.g. lichens and mosses (often called *colonizer* species) gradually build up soil on rock in primary succession, herbs and grasses can colonize the site site and crowd out the original pioneer species (lichens and mosses).

Inhibition: An earlier species hinder the establishment and growth of other species. Inhibition often occurs when plants such as butternut or black walnut release toxic chemicals that reduce competition from other plants.

Tolerance: Plants in the late stages of succession are largely unaffected by plants that came in during earlier stages because the later plants are not in competition with the earlier ones for key resources. For example, shade tolerant trees and other plants can thrive beneath the older, larger trees of a mature forest because they do not need to compete with the taller species for access to sunlight.

Pioneer Species: Trees such as aspen and cherry are often called pioneer species because of their ability to colonize new areas rapidly and grow well in full sunshine. Shade tolerant species eventually grow up through the pioneer canopy and dominate the forest community.

Succession occurs in aquatic ecosystems.
Over a time span of hundreds to thousands of years, lakes are filled in with sediments and slowly become terrestrial habitats.