

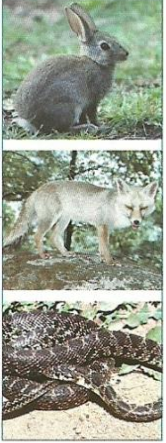
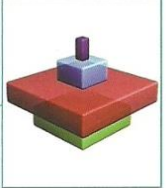


WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW?

THE STRUCTURE OF ECOSYSTEMS	<p>Components of an ecosystem</p>	<p>An ecosystem includes the biocenosis, the biotope and the biotic and abiotic relationships established between them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biocenosis. All the living beings which inhabit a natural area and the relationship between them. • Biotope. The physical environment of the ecosystem and its characteristics. 	
	<p>Relationships among organisms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intraspecific. Interactions among individuals of the same species. • Interspecific. Relationships among individuals of different species. 	
	<p>Trophic levels in an ecosystem</p>	<p>A trophic level includes all the organisms which obtain the matter and energy they need in the same way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers. Autotrophic organisms which make their own organic matter from inorganic matter. • Consumers. Heterotrophic organisms which feed off organic material which has already been produced. Three types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Primary consumers (herbivores). – Secondary consumers (carnivores and some omnivores). – Tertiary consumers (carnivores and some omnivores). • Decomposers. Heterotrophic organisms which transform organic matter back into inorganic matter. <p>In ecosystems, energy has a unidirectional flow. Matter has a cyclical flow.</p>	
	<p>Trophic dynamics</p>	<p>Food chains or food webs are used to represent the relationships among organisms in an ecosystem.</p> <p>The trophic structure of an ecosystem can also be represented graphically by trophic pyramids.</p>	
	<p>Habitat and ecological niche</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat. The physical environment where individuals of a particular species live and are adapted. • Ecological niche. The function which a particular species has in an ecosystem. 	