

Niche and Habitat

Watch: *The Lion King*

What role(s) do the antelope play?



What role(s) do the lions play?

What role(s) does the grass play?



Read: *Niche v. Habitat*

Every organism has a place to live in nature, a functional role in that place, and a complex set of adaptations for reproducing its kind. On the surface, this observation might seem to be obvious. However, in order to understand our biological world—the biosphere, how it operates and ultimately how to protect it—we need to understand at a deep level how organisms interact with each other and with their physical environment.

What is your favorite organism (animal, plant, bacteria)?

The article lists two things an organism interacts with. What are they?

Ecologists use many concepts to organize their thoughts about the ways in which organisms use their environment, relate to each other, and assemble into communities or ecosystems. The most fundamental and perhaps most difficult of these concepts is that of the ecological **niche**. A niche refers to the way in which an organism fits into an ecological community or ecosystem, or its role. A niche includes what type of food the organism eats, how it obtains this food, and what other organisms eat it. A niche also includes when and how the organism reproduces and the physical conditions it requires to survive.

What is a synonym (or a word with a similar meaning) for niche?

A **habitat** is the actual location in the environment where an organism lives and consists of all the physical and biological resources available to a species.

What is a synonym (or a word with a similar meaning) for habitat?

Practice: Mad Minute

H for Habitat, N for Niche. Ready... go!

_____ A mouse lives in a tree trunk.

_____ Hyenas eat dead animals and small rodents.

_____ Some birds fly south in the winter and eat insects when they get there.

_____ The Hyenas stay in a cave.

_____ Some birds live in the tops of the trees in a nest.

_____ A mouse is eaten by snakes and eats grass.

Practice:

Look at the picture.
Identify three organisms
and list their habitat
and their niche in this
ecosystem.



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| Organism | Habitat | Niche |
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