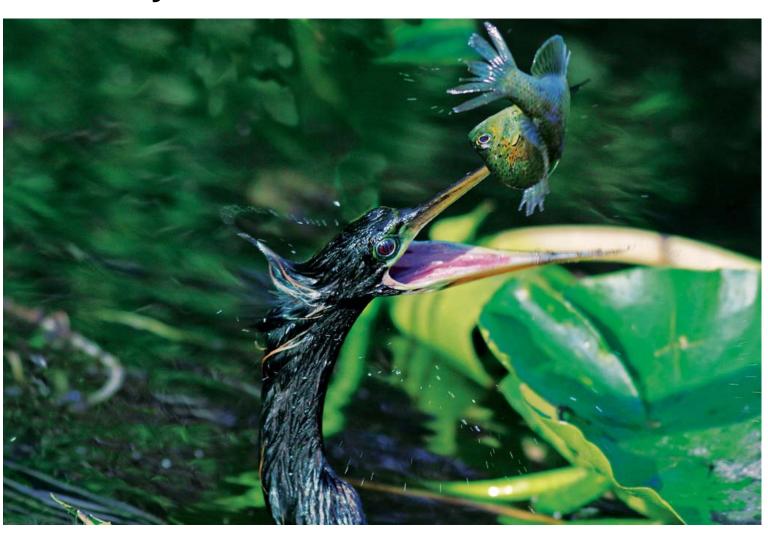
KEY CONCEPT

Food chains and food webs model the flow of energy in an ecosystem.



- A food chain is a model that shows a sequence of feeding relationships.
 - A food chain links species by their feeding relationships.
 - A food chain follows the connection between one producer and a single chain of consumers within an ecosystem.



- Consumers are not all alike.
 - Herbivores eat only plants.
 - Carnivores eat only animals.
 - Omnivores eat both plants and animals.
 - Detritivores eat dead organic matter.
 - Decomposers are detritivores that break down organic matter into simpler compounds.



carnivore



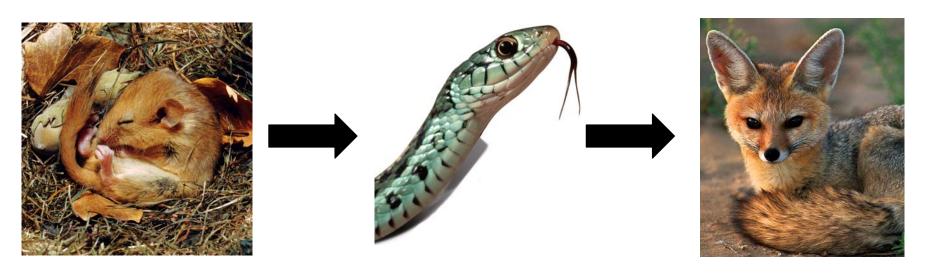
decomposer

 Specialists are consumers that primarily eat one specific organism or a very small number of organisms.



Generalists are consumers that have a varying diet.

- Trophic levels are the nourishment levels in a food chain.
 - Primary consumers are herbivores that eat producers.
 - Secondary consumers are carnivores that eat herbivores.
 - Tertiary consumers are carnivores that eat secondary consumers.
 - Omnivores, such as humans that eat both plants and animals, may be listed at different trophic levels in different food chains.



- A food web shows a complex network of feeding relationships.
 - An organism may have multiple feeding relationships in an ecosystem.
 - A food web emphasizes complicated feeding relationships and energy flow in an ecosystem.

