

BIODIVERSITY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF LIFE

Life on Earth National 5 Biology
The role of a species in an ecosystem

ROLE OF A SPECIES IN AN ECOSYSTEM

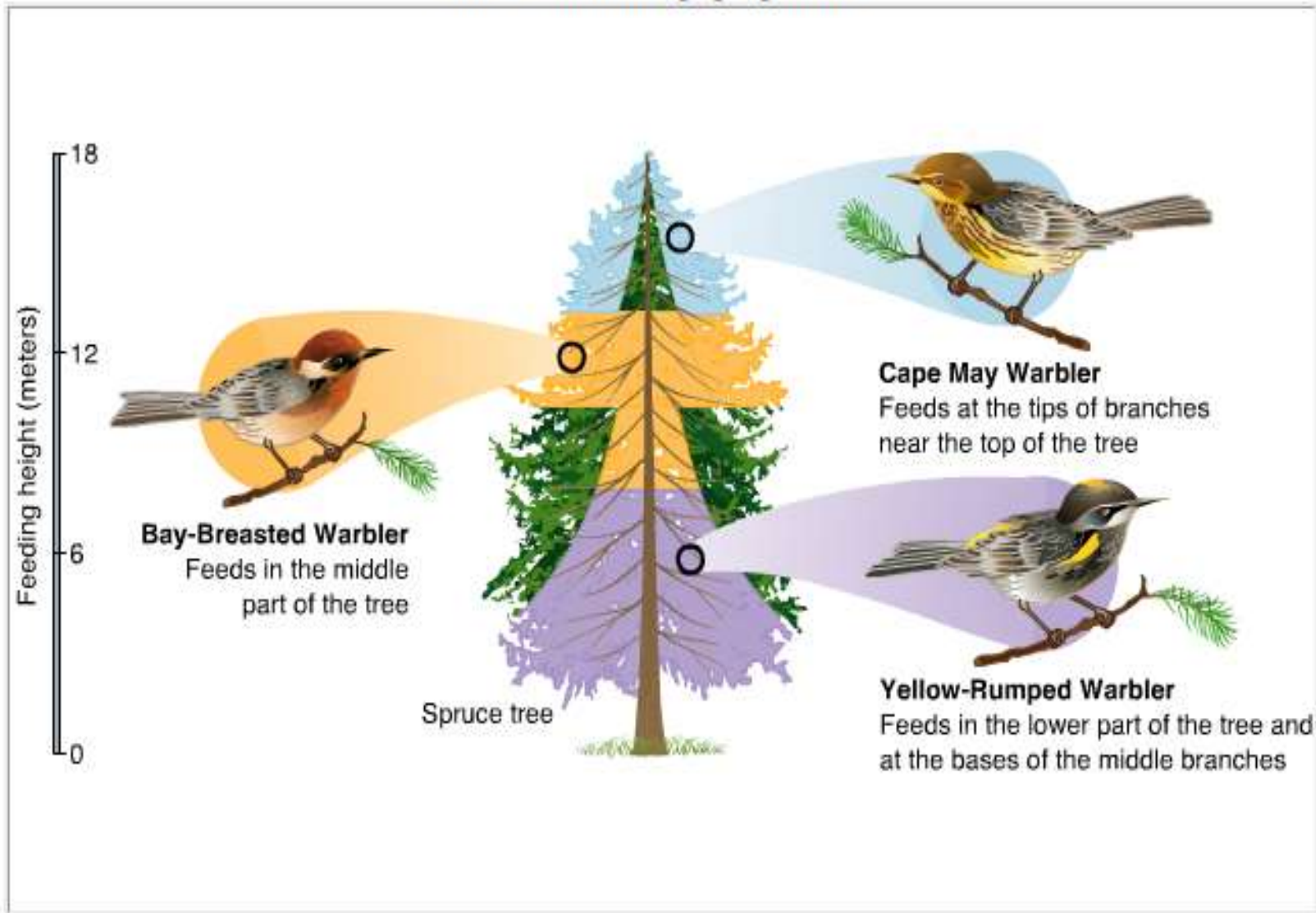
By the end of these lessons you should be able to:

- ◉ Describe what is meant by a niche.
- ◉ Give examples of organisms and their niches.

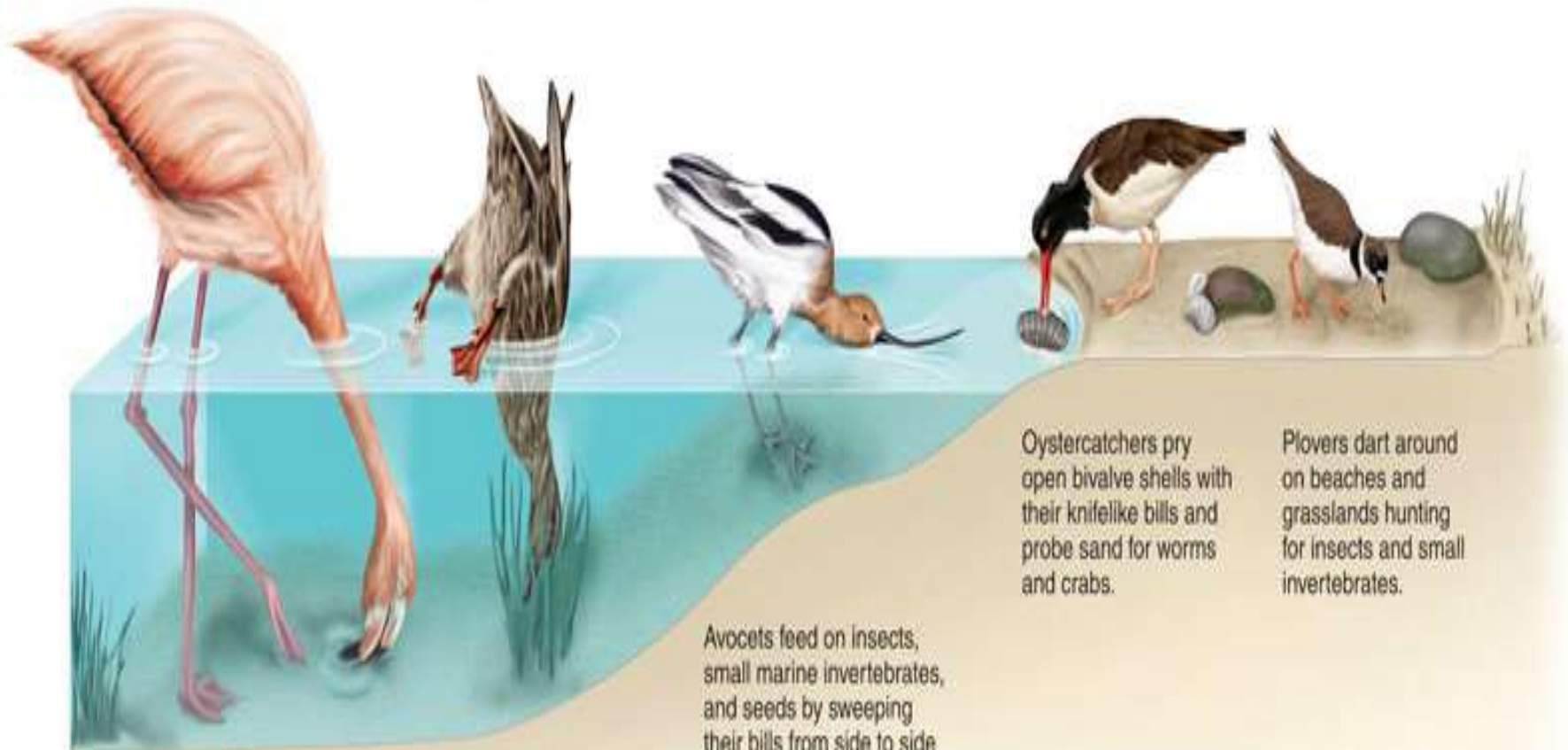
WHAT IS A NICHE?

- ⦿ An organism's niche is the role that it plays within its community.
- ⦿ It can be a description of what it eats, or what eats it!
- ⦿ It can describe whether it's a carnivore, herbivore, decomposer etc.

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Warbler Niches Each of these warbler species has a different niche in its spruce tree habitat. By feeding in different areas of the tree, the birds avoid competing with one another for food. **Inferring** What would happen if two of the warbler species attempted to occupy the same niche?



Flamingos feed on small molluscs, crustaceans, and vegetable matter strained from mud pumped through their bills by their powerful tongues.

Dabbling ducks feed by tipping, tail up, to reach aquatic plants, seeds, snails, and insects.

Avocets feed on insects, small marine invertebrates, and seeds by sweeping their bills from side to side in shallow water.

Oystercatchers pry open bivalve shells with their knifelike bills and probe sand for worms and crabs.

Plovers dart around on beaches and grasslands hunting for insects and small invertebrates.

DARWIN'S FINCHES- ADAPTED TO THEIR NICHE

- ◉ Galapagos Finches

- ◉ The finches on the Galapagos have changed over many years to fill all available niches.

CAN YOU.....

- ◉ Give a definition of a niche?
- ◉ Give some examples of organisms and their niches?