



Food chains

Many of the plants and animals that live together in a community depend on each other as a source of food, or to help them breed.

All life must eat to survive. As a result, each of the species in a community must find enough to eat. They must also breed to continue the species.

Plants

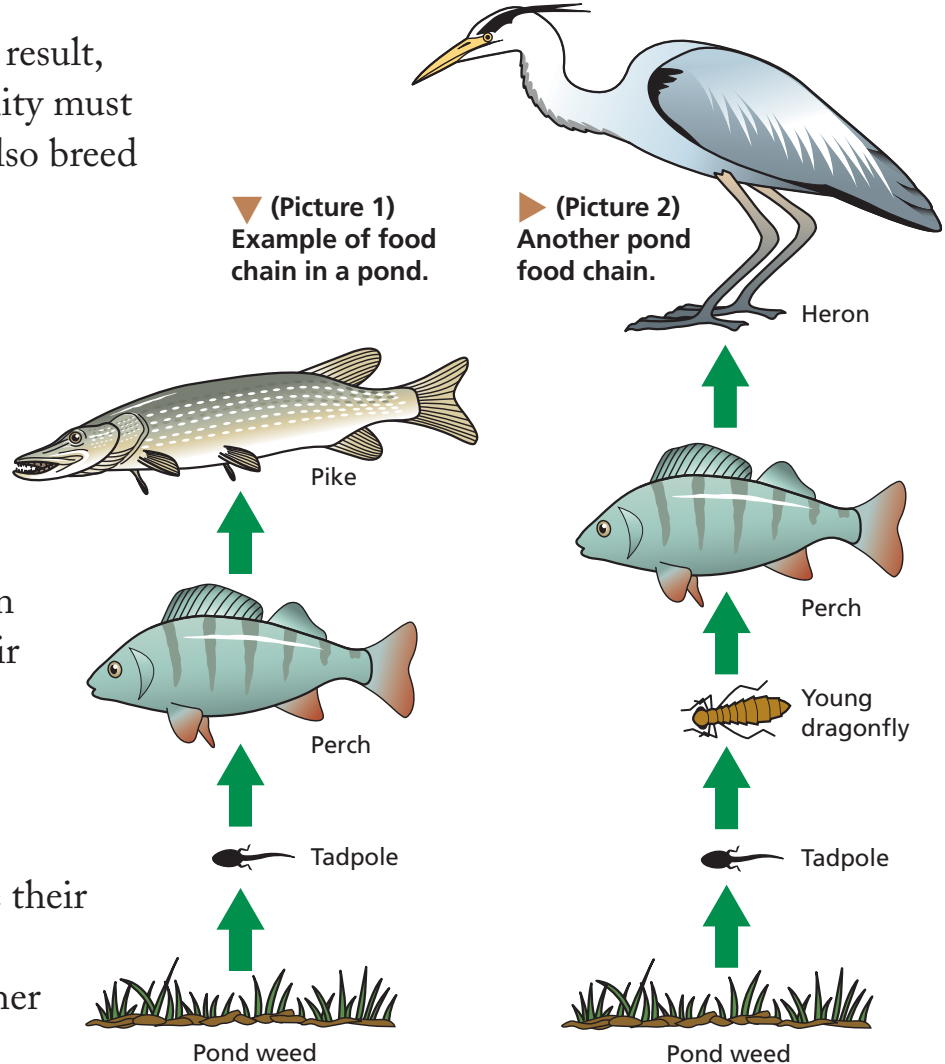
Plants produce their food from the soil, water and air. They produce more living material than anything else in the community. Plants need animals to help carry their pollen between plants, and to carry their seeds to new areas where they can grow.

Plant-eating animals

No other living things can make their food from the materials around them. Instead, they must eat either plants, or other animals. Many animals eat plants, either the leaves, roots or seeds.

Hunters

Some animals are not able to get the nourishment they need from plants. Instead they must eat other animals. They are called hunters. The food for the hunters may be other meat-eating animals, or it may be plant-eating animals.

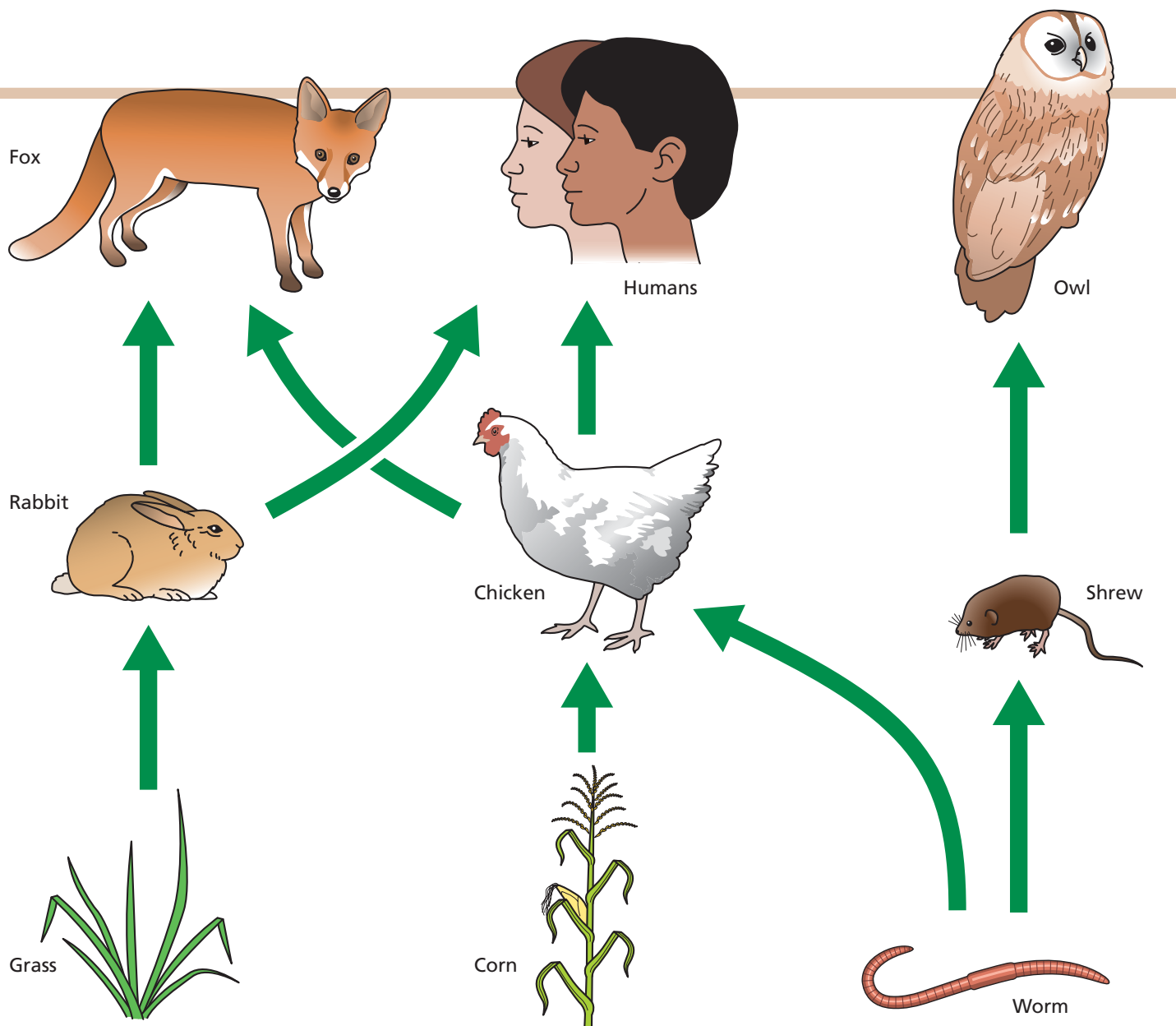


Food chain

As you can see, in nature there is a long line of animals, each depending on another animal or a plant for its food. Scientists call this a **FOOD CHAIN**.

Picture 1 shows a typical food chain for part of a pond:

Pond weed ➔ tadpole ➔ perch ➔ pike



Notice that the plant is on the left when the chain is written in words, and the pike (the last link in the chain) is on the right.

Any community will have lots of food chains. Picture 2 shows another pond example:

Pond weed → tadpole → young dragonfly → perch → heron

Summary

- Animals and plants depend on one another.
- A group of plants and animals that depend on one another are linked into a food chain.

▲ (Picture 3) Examples of food chains on land. Some animals belong to more than one food chain. This is shown by the cross-over arrows.

There are also many food chains on land. Picture 3 shows three examples, one of which includes us.

Harder words

You may want to remember these words:

- Plant-eating animals are called **HERBIVORES**.
- Meat-eating animals are called **CARNIVORES**.
- Animals that hunt other animals are called **PREDATORS**.
- Animals that are hunted are called **PREY**.