READING SUMMARY

This reading selection is about ecosystems. It focuses on animal habitats and communities and on the role each living thing plays in an ecosystem.

SCAFFOLDING

Have students in small groups read silently as they listen to the CD/tape. Then have them take turns reading aloud paragraphs to the group.

MODELING THE READING STRATEGY

Skimming: Before students begin reading, have them skim pages 50 and 51, including the headings, the opening paragraphs, and the topic sentences of the other paragraphs. Discuss how skimming this material can help them identify the type of information this selection will contain. Have students brainstorm a purpose for reading, based on their skimming of the text. A possible purpose might be to find out what an organism is and where specific organisms live.

GUIDED READING

1. What is a species? *(A species is a group of very similar organisms.)*
2. What do you call the place where an animal or plant lives? *(its habitat)*
3. According to the selection, what is another word for *habitat*? *(surroundings or environment)*

FOCUS ON CONTENT **Science**

First, preview the text. Then skim it. Read the first and second paragraphs. Then read only the first sentences of the paragraphs that follow. Finally, read the last paragraph. When you've finished skimming, read the text more carefully. Be aware of your purpose for reading it.

Ecosystems

THE SYSTEMS OF NATURE

Organisms and Species

1 An organism is a living thing. A huge redwood tree is an organism. A small mouse is an organism. A tiny insect is an organism. You are an organism, too. Millions of organisms are so small that you cannot see them. Bacteria and viruses are examples of very small organisms.

A group of very similar organisms is a species. The organisms in a species are so similar that they can reproduce—have offspring, or babies—together, and their offspring can reproduce, too. Horses and cows, for example, cannot have offspring together because they are different species.

▲ Insect (water strider)

◀ A cat and its offspring

▲ Birds tend their nest.

Habitats

A habitat is the place where an organism lives—its surroundings or environment. A habitat provides the things an organism needs to **survive**, such as food, water, a livable temperature, and **shelter**. A habitat can be as large as an ocean or as small as a drop of water. It can be a forest or one tree. Several species may live in the same habitat, such as a river.

2 Different organisms live in different habitats because they have different **requirements** for survival. For example, a river or lake can be the habitat of some species of freshwater fish, such as trout. Freshwater trout cannot survive in the ocean, which contains salt water. An ocean and a lake are very different habitats. Similarly, the desert in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico is the habitat of the saguaro cactus. The saguaro cactus cannot survive in a **tropical** rain forest.

Sometimes animals move to different places within their habitats. For example, many kinds of frogs are born in water. However, they live mostly on land when they grow up. During very cold weather, some frogs go under the ground or bury themselves in mud at the bottom of **ponds** to stay warm.

survive, live
shelter, protected place to live
requirements, needs
tropical, having a hot and wet climate
ponds, small lakes

▲ Saguaro cacti

BEFORE YOU GO ON . . .

1. What is an organism? Give an example.
2. What does an organism's habitat provide?

HOW ABOUT YOU?

- What is your habitat?

CRITICAL THINKING

Have students respond orally or in writing to these questions:

- Is a rock an organism? How do you know? *(Possible answer: No. Rocks are not alive. They don't use oxygen. They don't grow. They don't need food and water.)*
- Why might a nesting bird move from its habitat? *(Possible answer: It might feel threatened by another animal.)*

ACTIVE READING

Draw a two-column chart on the board. Write *Heading* at the top of the first column and *Important Facts* at the top of the second column. Have students copy the charts into their notebooks. Explain that as students read, they should write the name of each section in the first column and important facts about the section in the second column.

Viewpoint

Have students name and describe what they see in the pictures on page 51. Call attention to the heading *Habitats*. Ask students to describe the type of habitat shown in the picture on the right. Have them name some organisms that might live in that habitat, such as lizards and snakes.

GRAMMAR MINILESSON

Capitalization

Have volunteers write their full names on the board and underline the capital letters. Ask a student to explain the capitalization rule for writing proper names in English. If necessary, explain that initial letters in first, middle, and last names are capitalized in English. Have students look at the reading selection title on page 50 and point to the capital letter *E* in *Ecosystem.* Guide a student to explain the capitalization rules for story titles. Then have students skim the second paragraph on page 51 to find names of countries that are capitalized. *(United States, Mexico)* Explain that the names of specific people, places, things, and ideas are capitalized in English.

Remind students that a capital letter is also used at the beginning of every sentence. Have students skim a textbook and write an example of the following capitalized words: person's name; specific place, thing, or idea; story title; first word in a sentence. Ask each student to share his or her examples with a partner.

REACHING ALL STUDENTS

LANGUAGE LEVELS

Beginning: Have students look through a wildlife book that shows only one type of habitat, such as a desert. Prompt students to think of words that describe the habitat. Then have them point to and name or describe animals and plants in the photographs. List the words students used on the board, and then help them read the words. Ask students to use the words to write sentences.

Advanced: Ask partners to prepare a written or oral description of the perfect habitat for a human being. They should be ready to explain why they included each feature. Give them time to make a drawing or painting of their ideal habitat. When they are ready, have them share their ideas and art with the whole group. The speakers might ask their listeners: *Would you like to live here? Why or why not?*

TEKS Corner TAKS Preparation

7.6(C); 7.7(D); 7.10(B); 7.10(F); 7.10(H); 7.10(K); 7.10(M); 7.11(A); 7.16(B); 7.22(B); 7.25(D); 7.26(D); 7.29(A); 7.30(B); 7.30(E)