

The Keystone Species

5th Grade • Main Idea • Reading Comprehension

Reading Passage

In ecology, a keystone species is an organism that helps define an entire ecosystem. Beavers fit this definition perfectly. When beavers are removed from an area, the dam breaks, the pond drains, and the wetland disappears, causing many other species to vanish as well. Scientists have observed that beaver ponds support more than 80 species of wildlife.

Comprehension Question

1. Which sentence best states the central idea?

- A) Beavers are a keystone species that are vital to their ecosystem.
- B) Dams can break easily.
- C) Ecology is the study of nature.

Answer Key

1. A