



MAP OF THE SERENGETI ECOSYSTEM

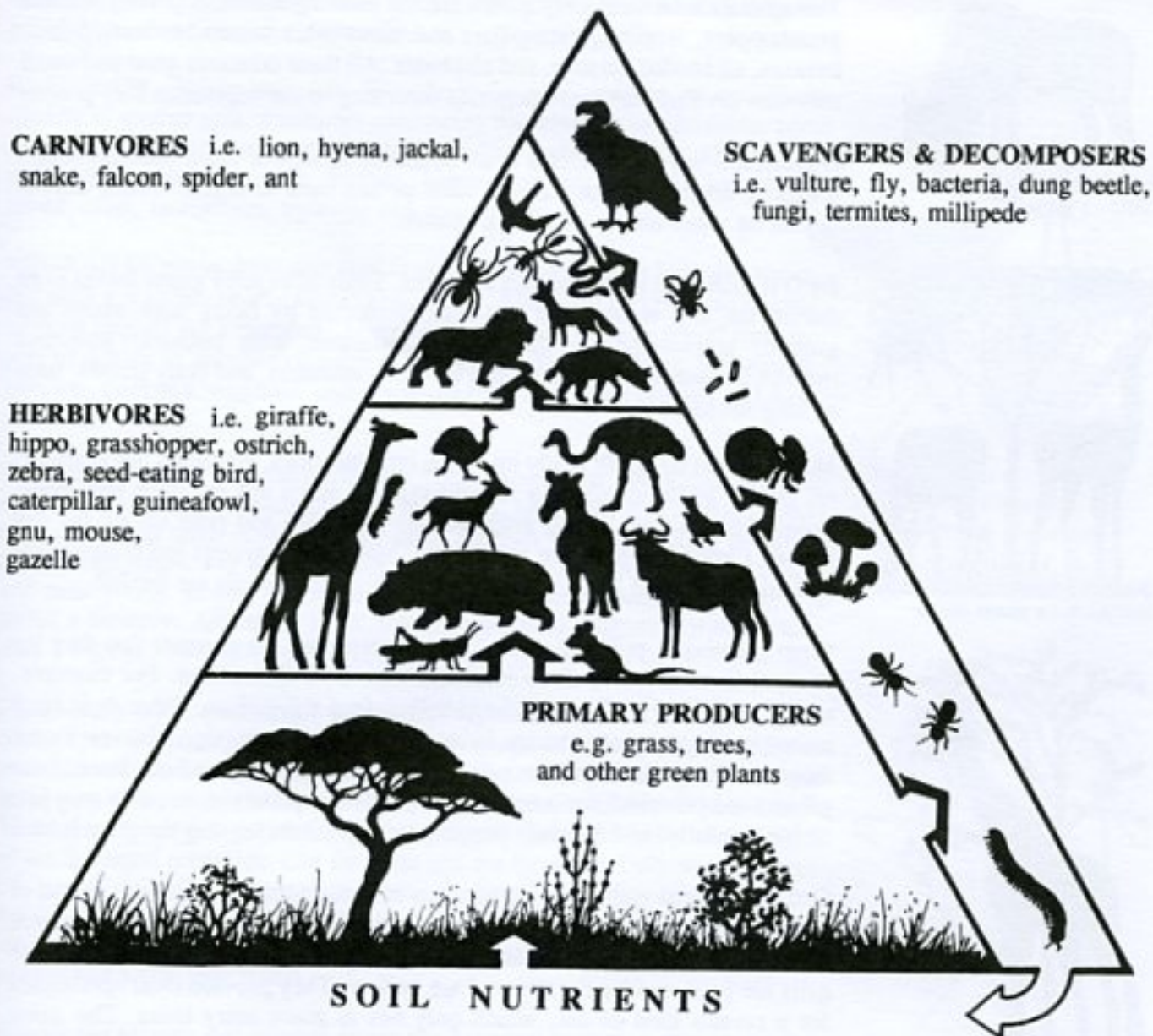
LOCATION: In northern Tanzania between latitude 1° 30' to 3° 20' South and longitude 34° to 35° 15' East .

SIZE: Park - 5,700 square miles (14,700 square kilometers), bigger than the state of Connecticut!
The Serengeti ecosystem is twice the size of the park. It is bounded by the Rift Valley and Ngorongoro Highlands to S and E, Lake Victoria to W, and Isuria escarpment to N.

ALTITUDE: From 6000 ft in the east to 3000 ft in the west.



THE ECOLOGICAL PYRAMID



BIODIVERSITY: Put cows, sheep and goats into the picture. What plants do they eat? What Serengeti animals do they compete with? Livestock would displace many other hoofed species, such as buffaloes. To keep livestock, you must also take out the big predators. The Serengeti's plant life would also change. Domestic herds would not migrate around the Serengeti. The sharp hooves of livestock carve trails between water, pastures and home base, causing erosion. Goats eat young trees. Herders set fires to promote grass growth, also destroying trees. Ultimately, there would be less vegetation in the system, hence more wind and rain erosion. Likewise, managed livestock would leave fewer carcasses for scavengers, less dung for beetles and less food for migrating birds. Already the system would be fundamentally changed.

Finally, remove about half the livestock because farmers move in and do not want animals on their crops. Imagine the Serengeti plowed up into farms, bare in the dry windy season, growing maize when it rains. Now what happens to the ecological pyramid? Diversity, numbers, the migration, all change dramatically. The simplified pyramid is the way much of the world is today.





SERENGETI JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

By now you will appreciate that every species of animal is adapted for a particular way of life. Scientists use the term "ecological niche" to describe an animal's position in the ecosystem - what it eats, when, where, and how much. You could almost call this a "job description." In this imaginary page from a newspaper, see if you can work out which animal would respond to each advertisement. Answers below.

SITUATIONS VACANT

Gardener, unafraid of heights, for pruning trees up to 16ft.

Garbage disposal team, to process bones, hides and other parts of dead animals. Must be available for both day and night shifts.

Excavation crew, to clear up dead trees or grass, and replace nutrients deep in the soil. Need to be able to remain long periods underground and build support structures such as ventilation shafts and storage tunnels. Live-in crew preferred.

Selection Board Members. High profile and big bucks for qualified candidates who can routinely select out the weak, unfit and socially undesirable or fringe members of groups. Needs sharp eyes and keen observational abilities. Camouflage coats come with the job.

Large Animal Control team. Should have proven experience at immobilizing buffalo, zebra, gnu and other large mammals. Favorable working hours (less than 4 per day); unlimited food, a job you can take pride in.

Fertilizer spreading crew, need to be able to dig in and work hard at all hours whenever fertilizer becomes available.

Rock gardeners to keep kopjes tidy. Accommodation available on site.

Lawn mowers for large area. Must provide own cutting tools with sharp edges to trim grass down to surface levels for nice lawn effect. Plentiful food available for suitable candidates.

Tree and bush clearance experts. Heavy work that needs special tools. Only the largest and strongest need apply.

Watchman/"Bouncers" Easy job for bulky applicants with the ability to be in the right place at the right time to keep human visitors in their vehicles or rooms. Relatively easy policing duties-ideal for retired herdsmen. Must be able to do odd heavy jobs such as entering marshy areas to push down vegetation to prepare grazing and visitor use sites.

Also gamekeeper jobs available for smaller applicants who are able to cover more distance, and are prepared to tackle the removal of livestock and pester their herdsmen over wide areas of woodland in Serengeti National Park.

Pest removal services. Constant surveillance needed to control insect pests that are destructive to the vegetation of the Serengeti. Any size and type acceptable but must be fast workers, especially in rainy season when pests are abundant. Overseas applicants welcomed.



Successful applicants for jobs from top to bottom of columns: Giraffes, Hyenas, Termites, Large predators, Lions, Dung Beetles, Hyraxes, Gnus and Hippos, Elephants, Buffaloes, Tsetse flies, Insect eating birds.

