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## A Close—Knit Family

An ecosystem is an area or an environment and all the living things contained within it. The life within an ecosystem is delicately balanced, and each life form depends on the other living things around it for survival. You can think of an ecosystem as a web of life, with each part of the web supported by all the other parts. If one piece is removed, all other parts are affected, either directly or indirectly.

Below are the names of several national parks and a list of some of the living things within the park's ecosystem. Describe the relationships among the various parts. The first one is done for you.

1. Yosemite National Park                      A temperate deciduous forest containing:

Deer  
Coyotes  
Trees  
Soil bacteria  
Shrubs

Shrubs provide food for the deer. Deer eat the shrubs and prevent overgrowth. Trees provide shade, which protects both shrubs and deer from the sun. Trees also help deer hide from predators. Coyotes eat deer, which keeps the deer population from growing too large and provides food for coyotes. Soil bacteria break down the bodies of dead animals and plants, which provides nutrients for the soil and allows new trees and shrubs to grow.

2. Death Valley National Park                      A desert containing:

Cactus plants  
Lizards  
Roadrunners (desert birds)  
Sagebush (desert shrubs)  
Rodents (hamsters, mice, rats)  
Moths



## Science

CD No. 1

Lesson No. 18

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3. Olympic National Park

The Elwha River containing:

Grasses

Raccoons

Pacific salmon

Tree roots

Mosquitoes

Frogs