

## CHAPTER 04

# What Do Animals Eat

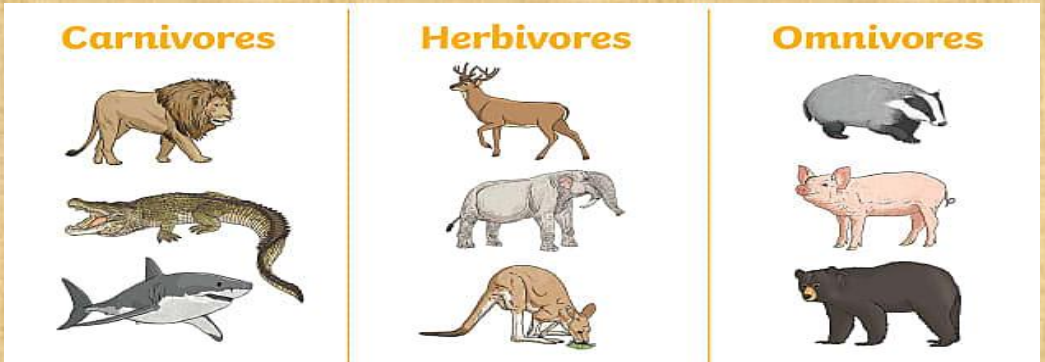
### Classification of Animals Based on What do Animals Eat:

On the basis of what animals eat, the organisms are classified into various groups. Animals cannot prepare their own food; hence, they depend on readymade food. Directly or indirectly, animals are dependent on plants and plant products, since plants are the basic producers for all organisms in the environment.

There are only a few animals that feed on plant products while others feed on the flesh of other creatures and there are even fewer that feed on both. As a result, of their eating habits, the animals are divided into different categories.

Herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores are the three main categories.

They have different teeth patterns to nibble, tear and chew the food. Apart from the plant-eaters and meat-eaters, there are specially classified animals that feed on blood, dead and decayed organisms, insects, fruits, etc.



**1. Herbivores:** The animals which depend on plants and plant products for their food or survival are called herbivores. They are also called plant-eaters/ animals that eat vegetables. The herbivores may eat grass, leaves, grains, fruits or the bark of trees. Some examples of herbivores are goat, cow, buffalo, sheep, horse, deer, camel, ox, elephant, giraffe, monkey, squirrel, rabbit, grasshopper, butterfly, parrot, hippopotamus, etc.

**2. Carnivores:** The animals which depend only on another animal for their food or survival are called carnivores. They are animals that eat other animals and they do not eat plant food at all. Carnivores eat only the meat (or flesh) of other animals. Hence, they are called meat-eaters. Some examples of carnivores are lions, tigers, frogs, vultures, kingfishers, lizards, wolves, snakes, etc.

**3. Omnivores:** The animals which depend on both plants (plant products) and animals for their food or survival are

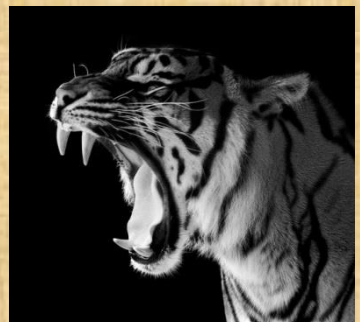
called omnivores. Some of the examples of omnivores are the man (Human beings), crow, sparrow, bear, mynah, ant etc. Man is called an omnivore because he eats plant food (such as grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables) as well as the meat of animals (such as goat, chicken and fish). Thus, omnivores are plant eaters as well as meat-eaters.

### **Teeth pattern of animals based on their food habit:**

**Teeth pattern of herbivores:** Herbivores have broad, flat molars (back teeth) with rough surfaces that are used for grinding up tough plant tissues. Many herbivores like squirrels and rabbits have chisel-like incisors in front teeth used for gnawing through wood or hard seeds.



**Teeth Pattern of Carnivores:** Carnivores like lions, tigers and wolves have sharp and pointed long teeth for catching, ripping and tearing the flesh of other animals. The most important teeth for carnivores are their long, sharp canine teeth which are used to pierce and kill



prey. Carnivore birds like eagles have hooked beaks and sharp claws for capturing and tearing.

**Teeth Pattern of Omnivores:** They have broad, flat molars for grinding up various foods. The front teeth are wide, narrow at the tip and somewhat chisel-shaped, making them useful for biting off chunks of meat or plant material.

**Scavengers:** There

are certain animals that feed on the dead and decayed plants



and animals. They are known as scavengers. They help to keep the environment clean by feeding on the dead and decayed matter.

Example: Vultures, hyenas, etc.

**Parasites:** It is a special group of animals that live inside or on other animals for their food. The animal they live in is called the host. Examples: Tapeworm (lives in the human intestine), ticks (on the skin of dogs), *Plasmodium* (in human beings, carried by *Anopheles* mosquitoes).

Animals use different body parts to collect or capture food.

S.no	Animal	Body part used in taking food
1	Hen	Beak, claws..
2	Cow	Tongue, teeth...
3	Dog	Sharp long teeth, leg, claws..
4	Frog	Sticky tongue, mouth..
5	Snake	Jaw..
6	Man	Hands..
7	Lizard	Tongue..
8	Vulture	Beak,...
9	Lion	Legs, claws, mouth, ...
10	Humming bird	Beak,..

You can observe that the same part may be used in different ways by different animals.

For example, tongue may be used by dog in a different manner as compared to frog. The dog licks with it while frog captures and swallows food with it. Also different parts may be used to take in the same type of food, like, hens use their beaks to pick insects while frogs use their tongues for the same purpose. The same part in a similar group of animals may be used in ways that can be largely different.

For example, beaks of different birds are used to eat different types of food. The type of food and the ways in which an animal collects it, form the food habit of the organism.

### **How do birds eat their food?**



### **By picking food with beak:**

Woodpeckers have a long and strong beak. By using this beak, they remove layers of bark and eat ants and pests which lie under the bark. Crane has a long beak to catch fish in water.

### **Have you ever seen vultures?**

They have strong hooked beaks to tear flesh off animals. Vultures would need sharp claws along with strong hooked beaks to tear flesh, while the hummingbird that sucks nectar would need a long thin beak and does not need sharp claws.



Parrot, which eats fruits and cracks nuts, has a hooked beak, while the crow does not have it. Not only the beak, there are other parts as well that are different to suit the type of food eaten by a bird.

