



Nature's Cleanup Crew!



Even when plants and animals die, they are not wasted. Nature has a cleanup crew that breaks down dead material and returns nutrients to the soil.

Scavengers

Scavengers are animals that find and eat dead plants or animals. They help break larger pieces into smaller pieces.



Examples: beetles, snails, and birds

Decomposers

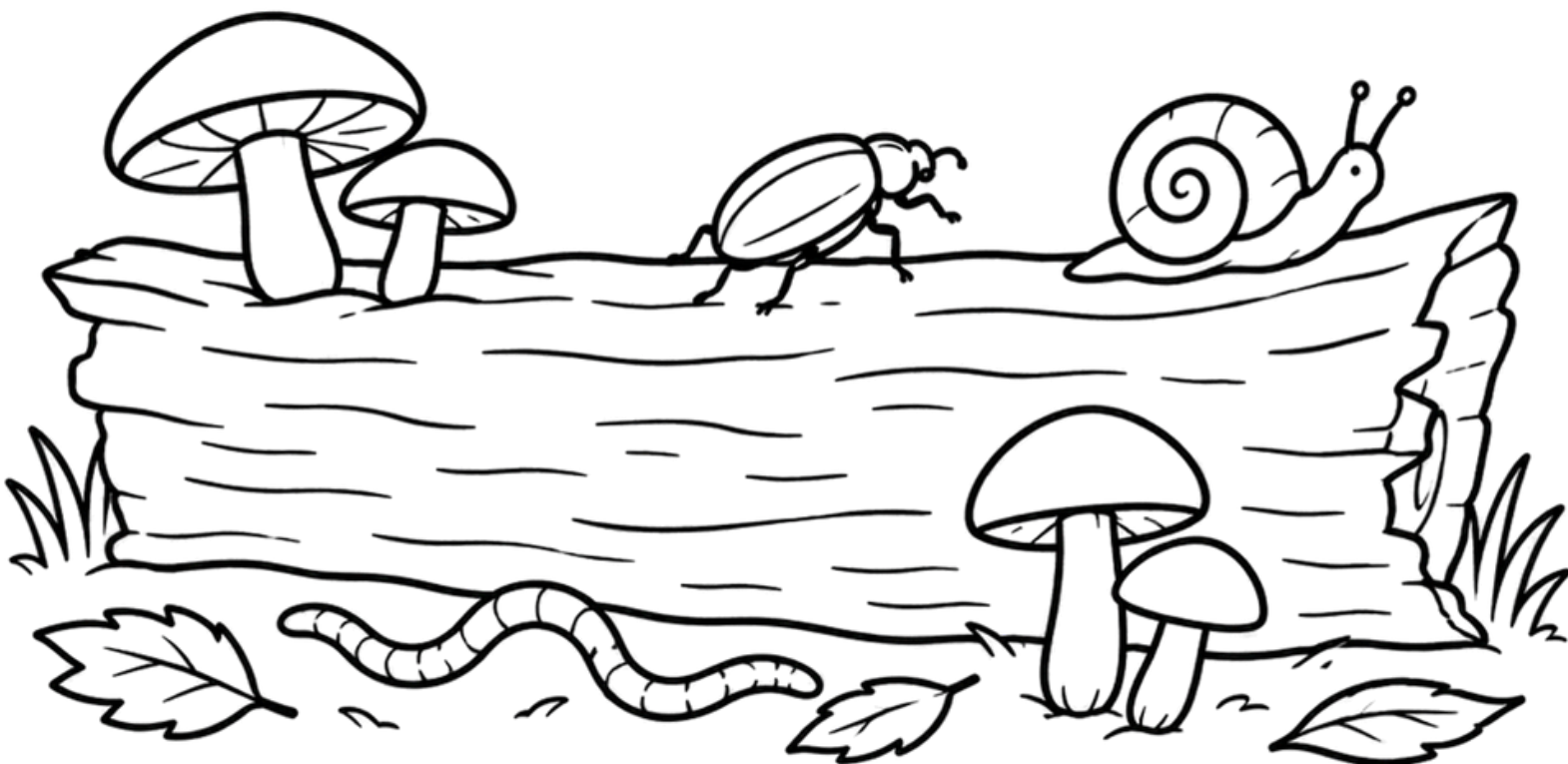
Decomposers are tiny organisms, like fungi and bacteria, that break down dead material into very small pieces. They return important nutrients to the soil, which helps new plants grow.



Examples: fungi and bacteria

1 Look closely at the picture below.

Find and circle all of the scavengers and decomposers. Then color the scene!



2 What did you find?

Check off each item you found.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Beetle (scavenger) | ☐ Mushroom (decomposer) |
| ☐ Snail (scavenger) | ☐ Bacteria (decomposer) |
| ☐ Bird (scavenger) | ☐ Dead leaves (decomposers) |
| ☐ Earthworm (detritivore) | ☐ Fallen log (home to all of them!) |

3 Explore Outside!

On your next geocaching adventure, look for signs of nature's cleanup crew. What do you see? Draw or describe something you find.



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Leave It Better Than You Found It!