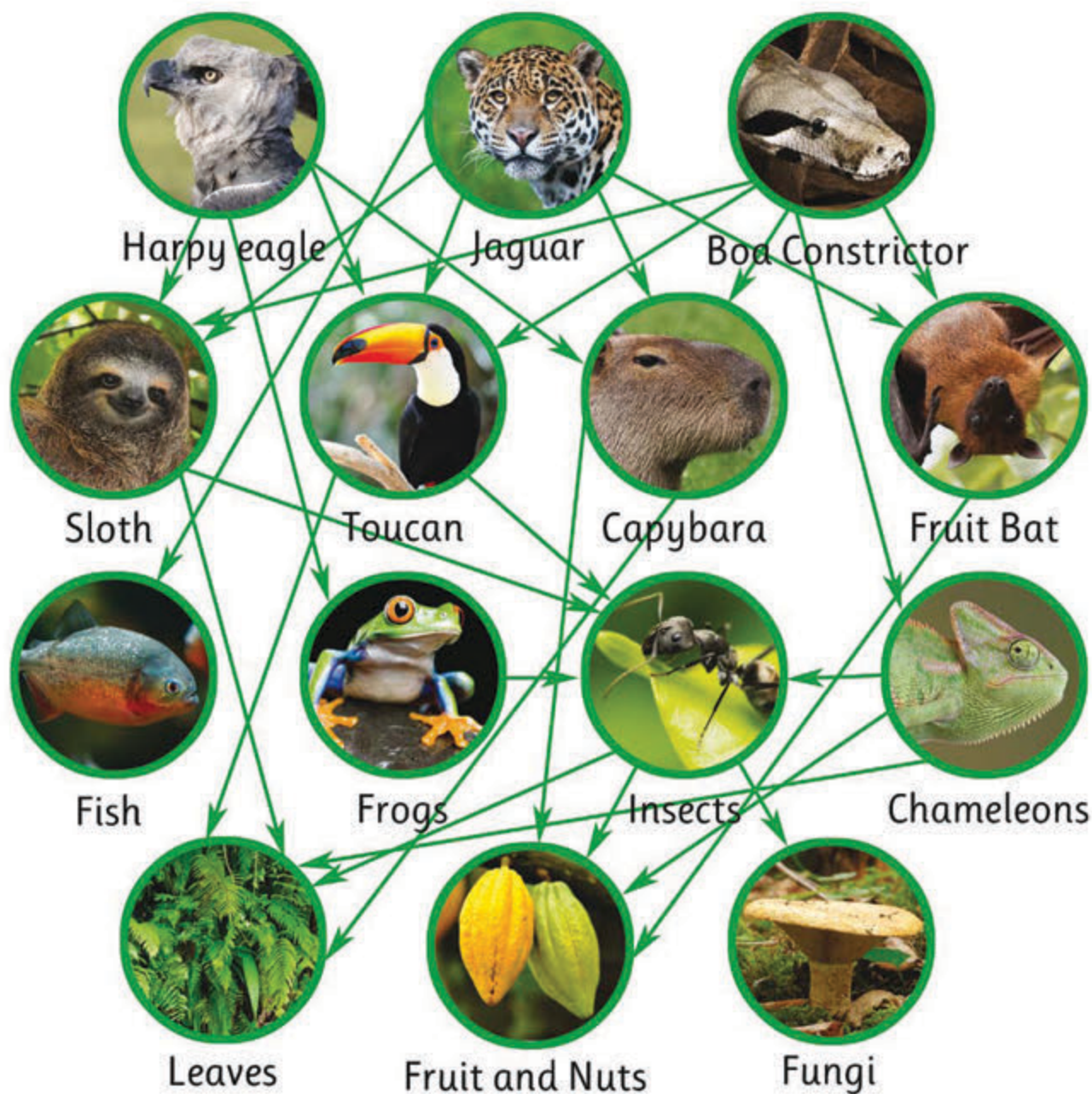


A **food web** describes who eats what in an ecosystem. It also shows how the Sun's **energy** moves through the ecosystem as animals eat. In a tropical rainforest, hundreds of kinds of shrubs and trees produce tasty leaves, seeds, and fruit. Fruit bats, sloths, insects, and other plant-eaters feed on them and, in turn, are eaten by carnivores. Harpy eagles, for example, regularly dine on sloths.



Because animals use part of the energy they eat for living and store only a portion in their bodies, energy is lost as it moves up the food web. Food webs can support just a few top predators.

Rainforest Food Web



Energy from the Sun enters the ecosystem and helps plants grow. Animals eat the plants and get energy from them. Other animals eat the plant-eaters and the energy is passed along. As living things die and decay, **nutrients** return to the soil.