

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Nature's Waste

### Clean up

What cleans up nature's waste?

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nature's Waste

## Scavengers

Explain what scavengers are as well as their role in an ecosystem.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Nature's Waste

### Beetles

#### **Behaviors and characteristics of dung beetles:**

- They find new droppings by following the smell. They are strong flyers, and may fly five kilometers (three miles) to reach fresh dung.
- They have special serrated forelegs and broad, hoe-like heads, which they use to carve out balls of dung.
- Dung is important to the whole life cycle of dung beetles. Both adults and larvae feed on the dung, and pairs of beetles (a female and a male) collect the dung in which eggs are laid.
- The largest dung beetles live in Africa and Asia, and can be up to seven centimeters (two-and-a-half inches) long. They feed on the mounds of dung left by elephants.
- Some dung beetles can move balls of dung up to 50 times their own weight. The balls can be as large as an apple.

#### **Behaviors and characteristics of carrion beetles:**

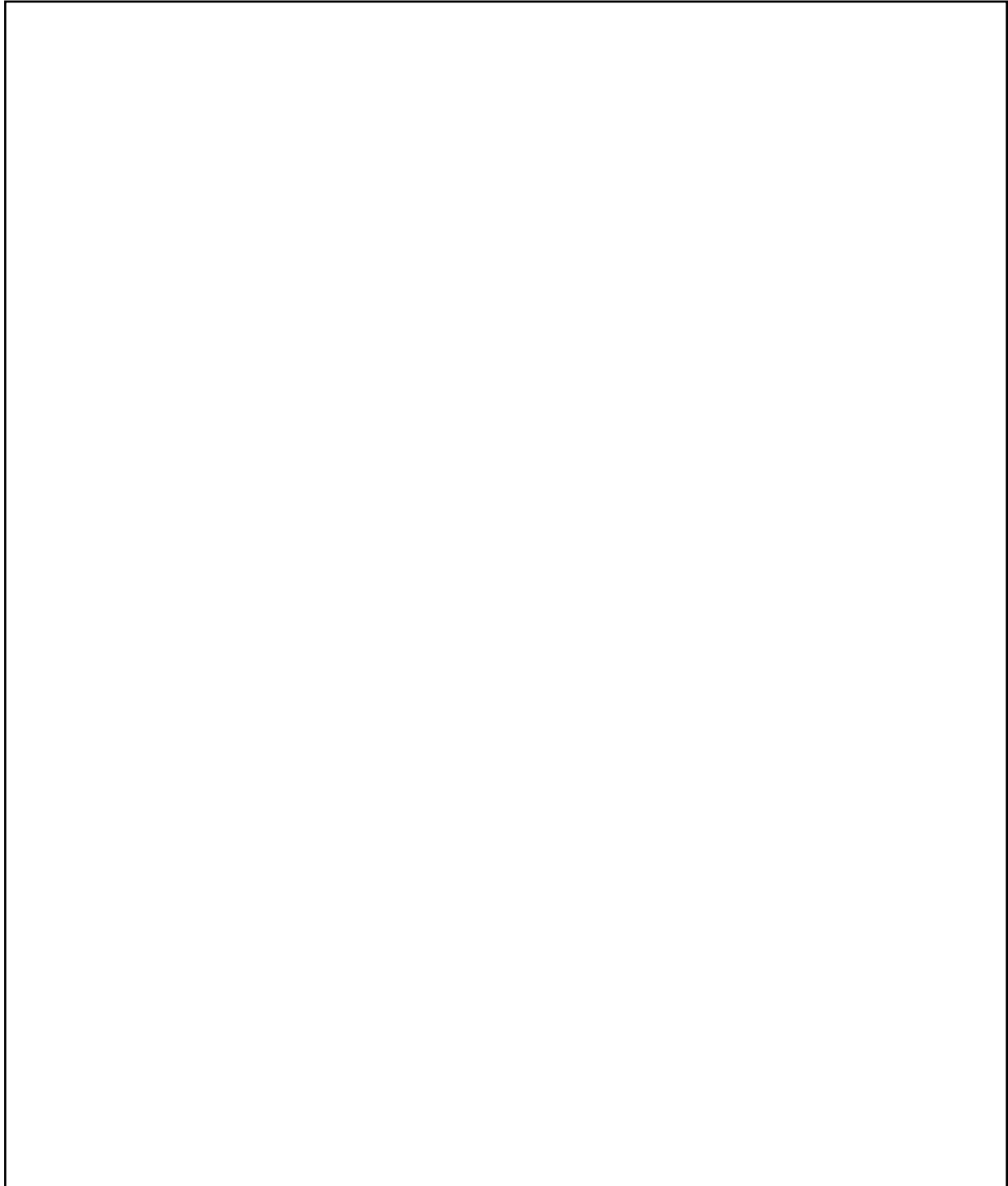
- Some carrion beetles arrive soon after an animal has died, and lay their eggs in the body. After they hatch, the beetle larvae feed on the meat.
- American burying beetles (such as those shown in the visuals) dig a hole beneath the body of a dead animal, and then cover the animal with dirt. They pull off all the fur or feathers, and roll the whole body into a tight ball.
- Some carrion beetles arrive after the dead animal has dried out, and the adult beetles eat the hide and tendons. These beetles (called dermestid beetles) are used by natural history museums around the world to clean animal skeletons.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nature's Waste

## Scavenger Model

Draw and label a model of how dung beetles or carrion beetles move matter in an ecosystem, including how they feed on matter and how that matter is broken into smaller pieces.

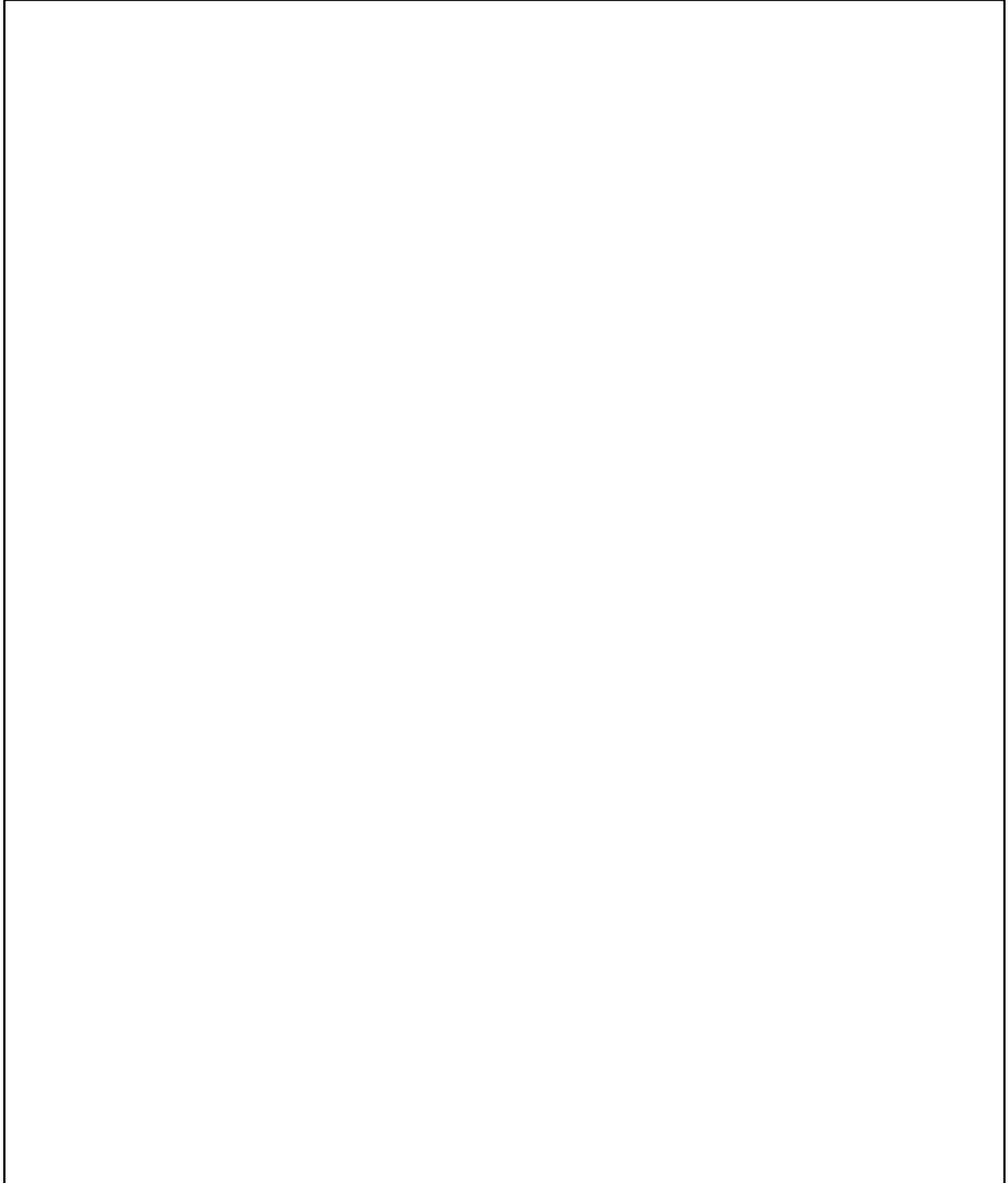


Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nature's Waste

## Fungi

Draw and label a model of how fungi move matter in an ecosystem, including how they feed on matter and how that matter is broken down.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nature's Waste

## Bacteria

Draw and label a model of how bacteria move matter in an ecosystem, including how they feed on matter and how that matter is broken down.

