

VERNAL POOLS



Big Puddles Full of Life!

WHAT IS A VERNAL POOL?

- *Fills with water in Fall or Springtime from rain and melting snow.*
- *Dries up in the Summer.*
- *Amphibians come lay eggs in pools in Spring.*
- *“Vernal” means “Spring”.*



NO FISH!



- *Fish cannot live in the pools. They would die when the pool dries up.*
- *Frogs and salamanders can lay their eggs in the pools without fish eating them.*



Each Vernal Pool can look different!



IMPORTANT TO ANIMALS!

- **Vernal Pool Animals:**

- Only lay their eggs in vernal pools and depend on them for survival:

- Wood Frog
- Spotted Salamander
- Fairy Shrimp

- **Wetland Animals:**

- Use pools for food and shelter but can live in other wetland ecosystems:

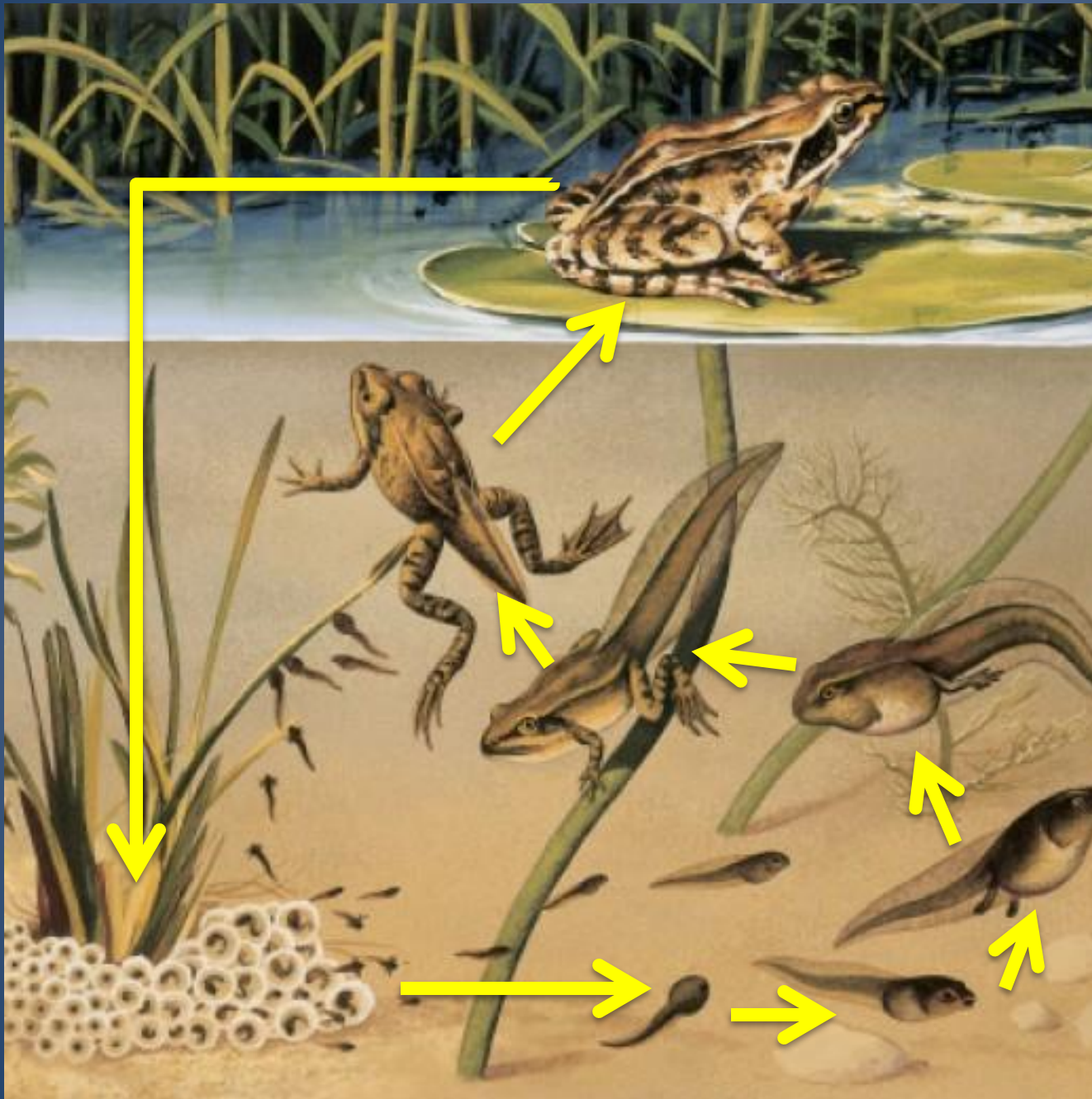
- Spring Peeper
- Tree Frog
- American Toad
- Green Frog
- Pickerel Frog
- Red Spotted Newt
- Spotted Turtle
- Box Turtle

WOOD FROGS

- Males make quaking sound like a duck!
- Tadpoles eat microscopic plants.
- Tadpoles are eaten by large beetles, snakes, and turtles.
- Adult frogs eat insects, spiders, worms, slugs & snails.

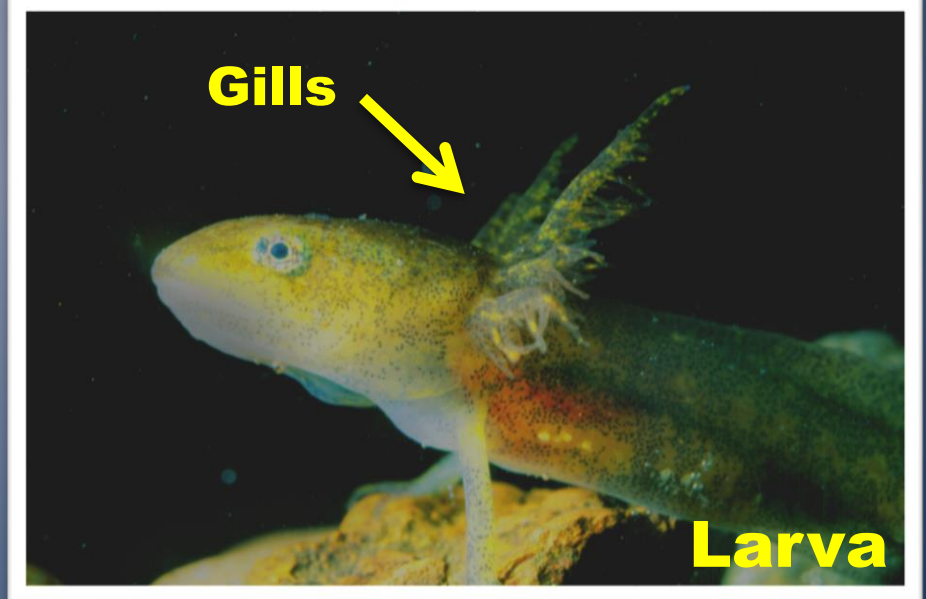


Life Cycle of Wood Frog

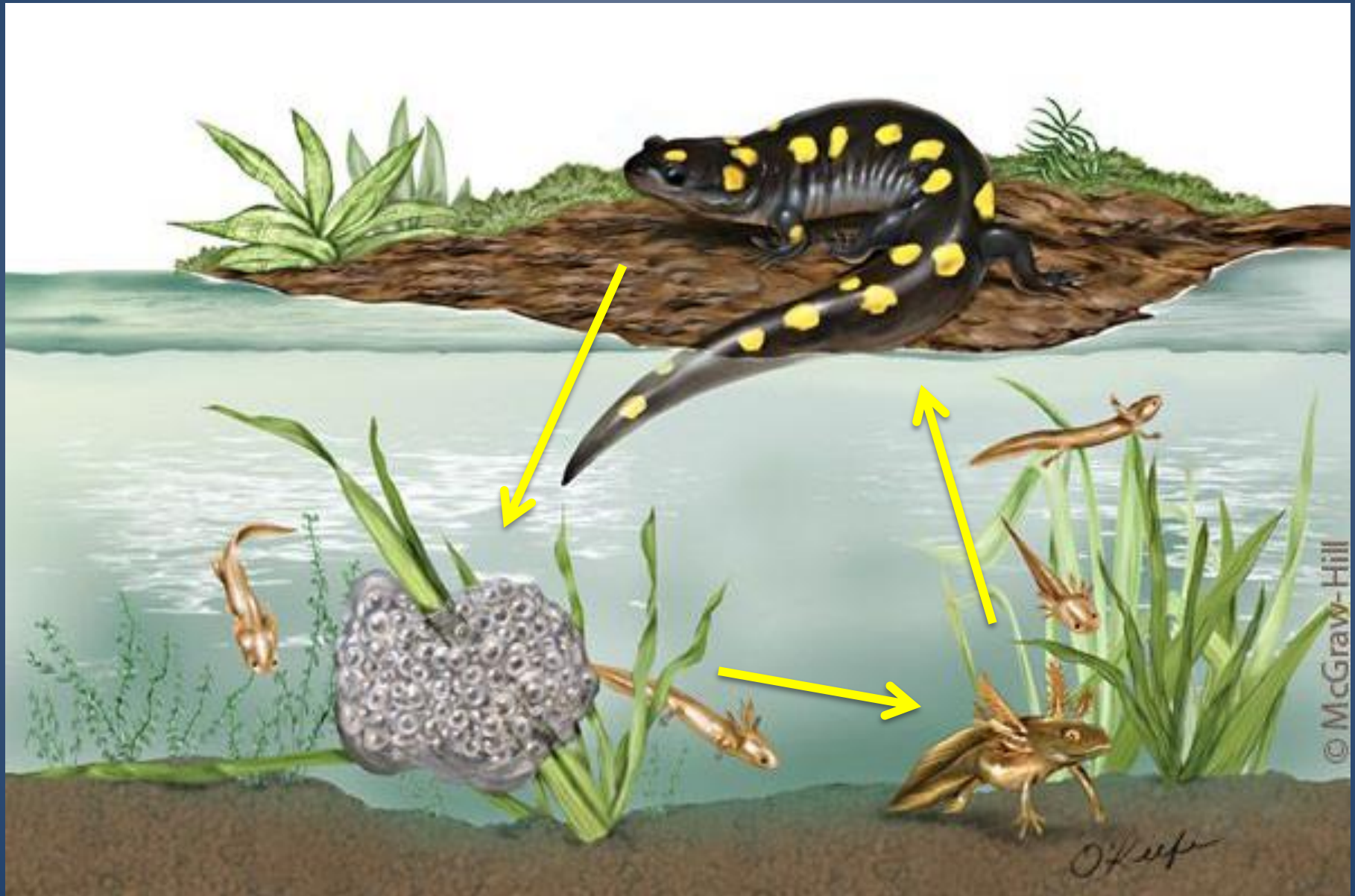


SPOTTED SALAMANDERS

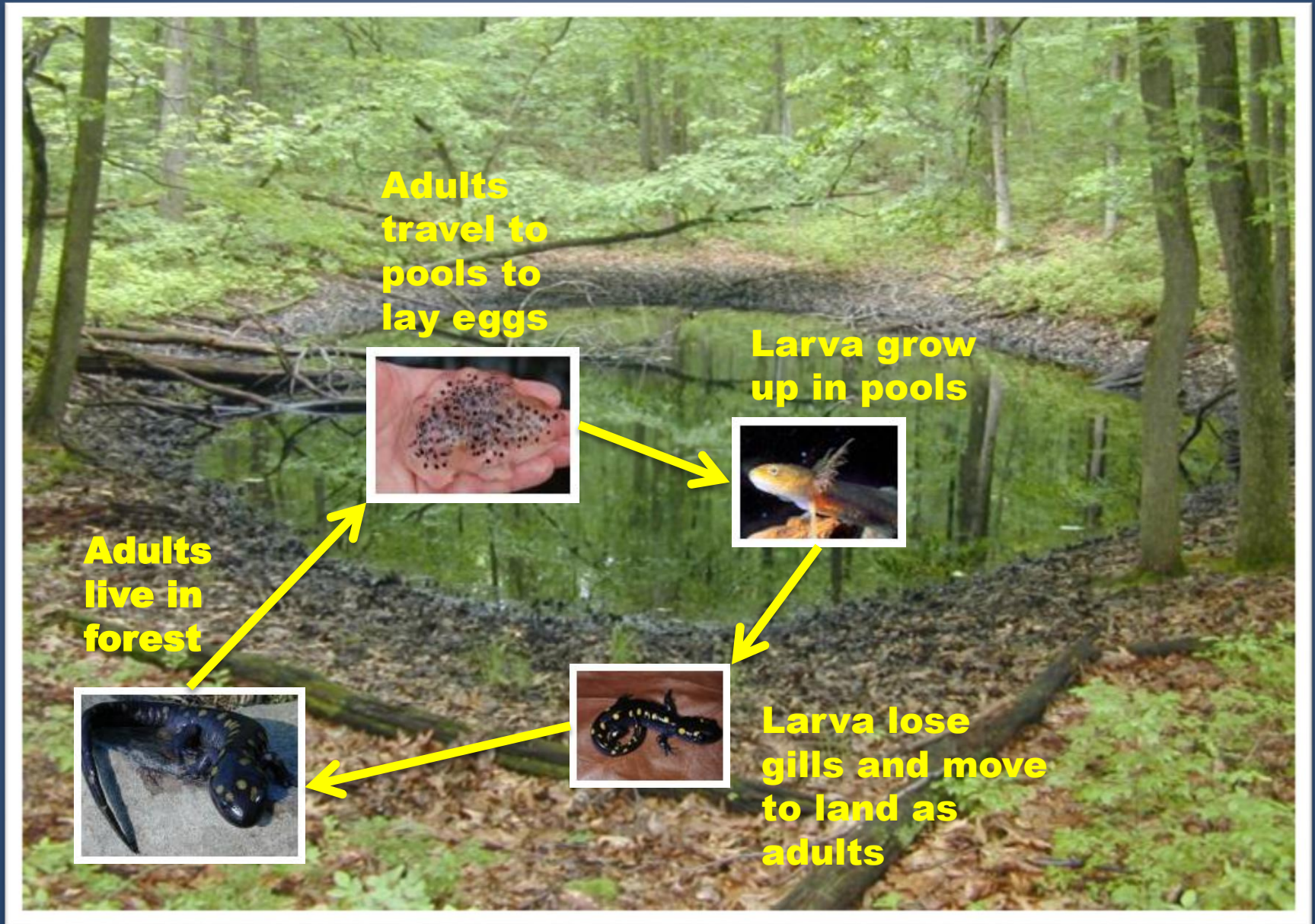
- A type of *Mole Salamander*- they spend most of their adult life underground in forests.
- Larva have feathery gills that they lose when become adults.
- Adults eat small insects, worms, centipedes, & spiders.



Life Cycle of Spotted Salamander



Life Cycle of Spotted Salamander



FAIRY SHRIMP



- *Only live in vernal pools!*
- *Swim upside down!*
- *Eggs can dry out completely, survive the winter, and hatch the next year when the pool fills up again.*

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

- *Invertebrate: No backbone*



Amphipod: decomposers, eat rotting leaves, look like tiny lobsters



Caddisfly larva



Backswimmer Beetle



Isopod: decomposers, eat rotting leaves & dead animals.



Diving Beetle & Larva



FOOD WEBS

- Animals from surrounding ecosystems come to pools to feed or get water.



SURROUNDING FOREST

- *Why is it important?*
 - *Leaves fall into vernal pool and are broken down by bacteria and fungi*
 - *The bacteria and fungi are food for insects*
 - *Insects are food for amphibians*
 - *Forest provides habitat for adult amphibians*

