limits the amount of organic carbon that primary producers introduce into food webs and the amount of energy available to support trophic pyramids. For this reason, the long-term maintenance and functioning of ecosystems require that organisms actively cycle not only carbon but also nitrogen, phosphorus, and other elements critical for life.

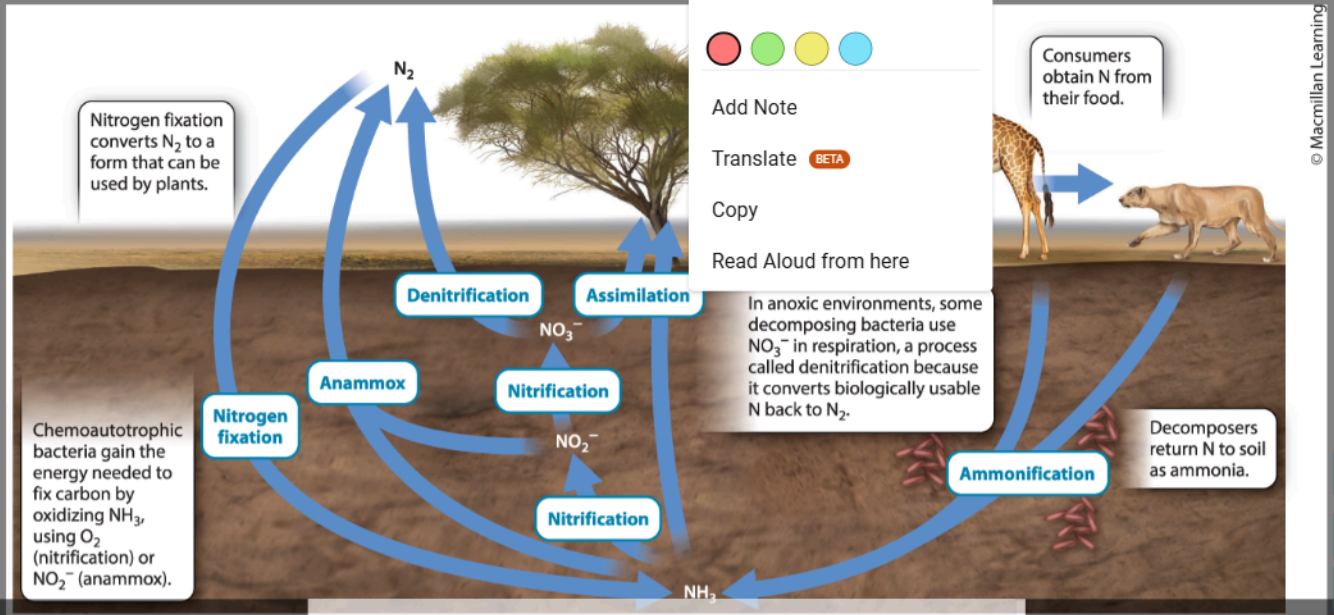

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FIG. 46.13 The nitrogen cycle. The nitrogen cycle also links metabolism and ecology, governing the availability of nitrogen for primary producers and thereby exerting a strong influence on the biological carbon cycle.

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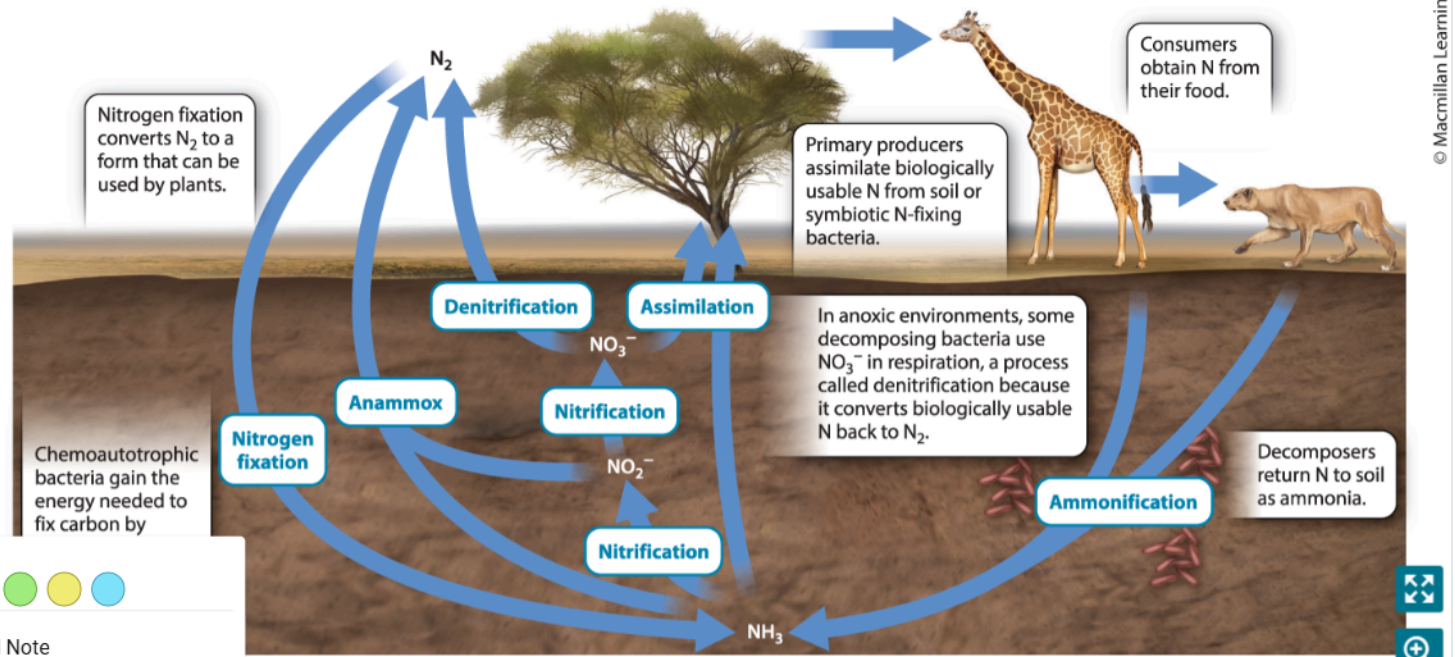

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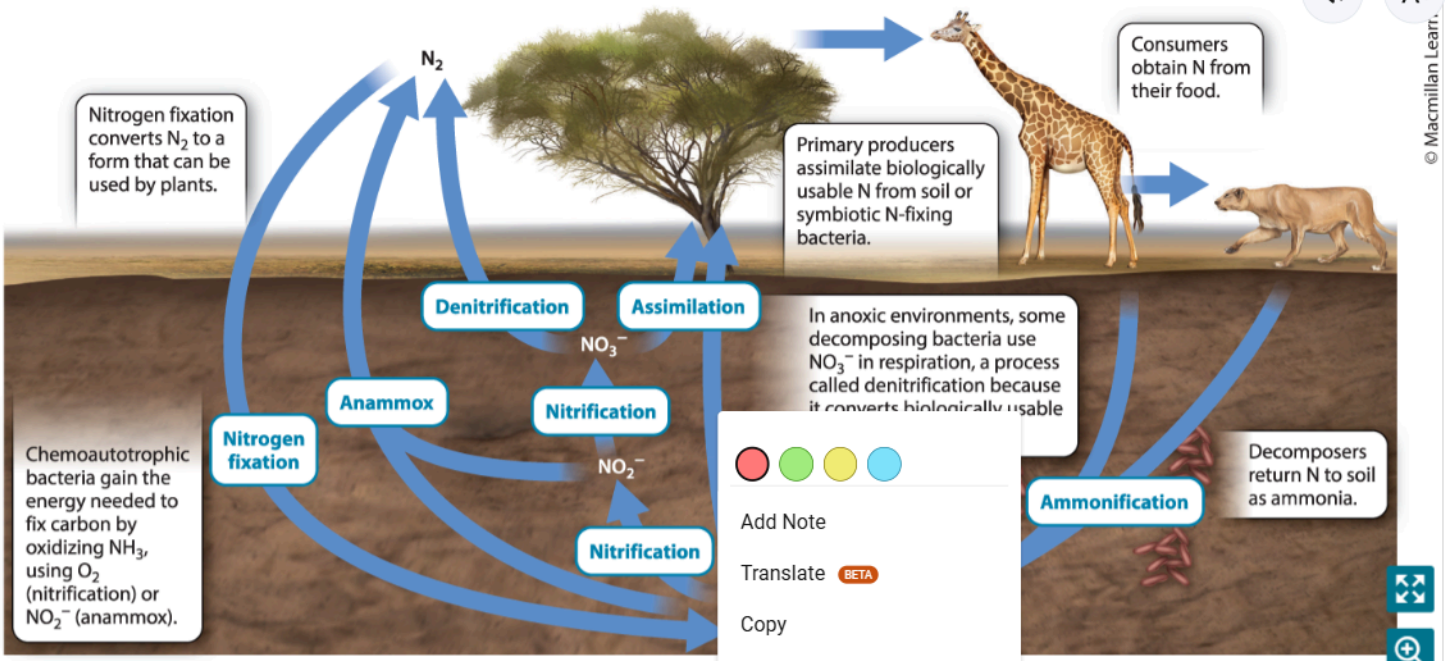

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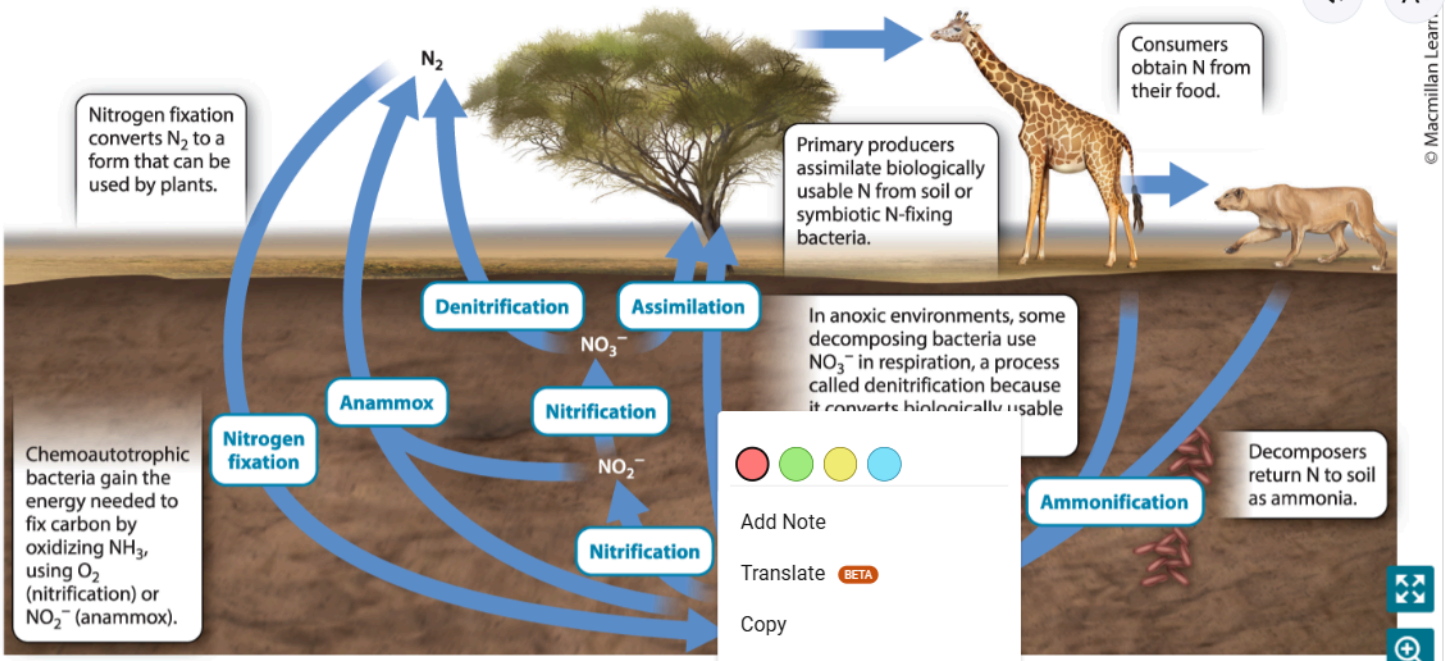

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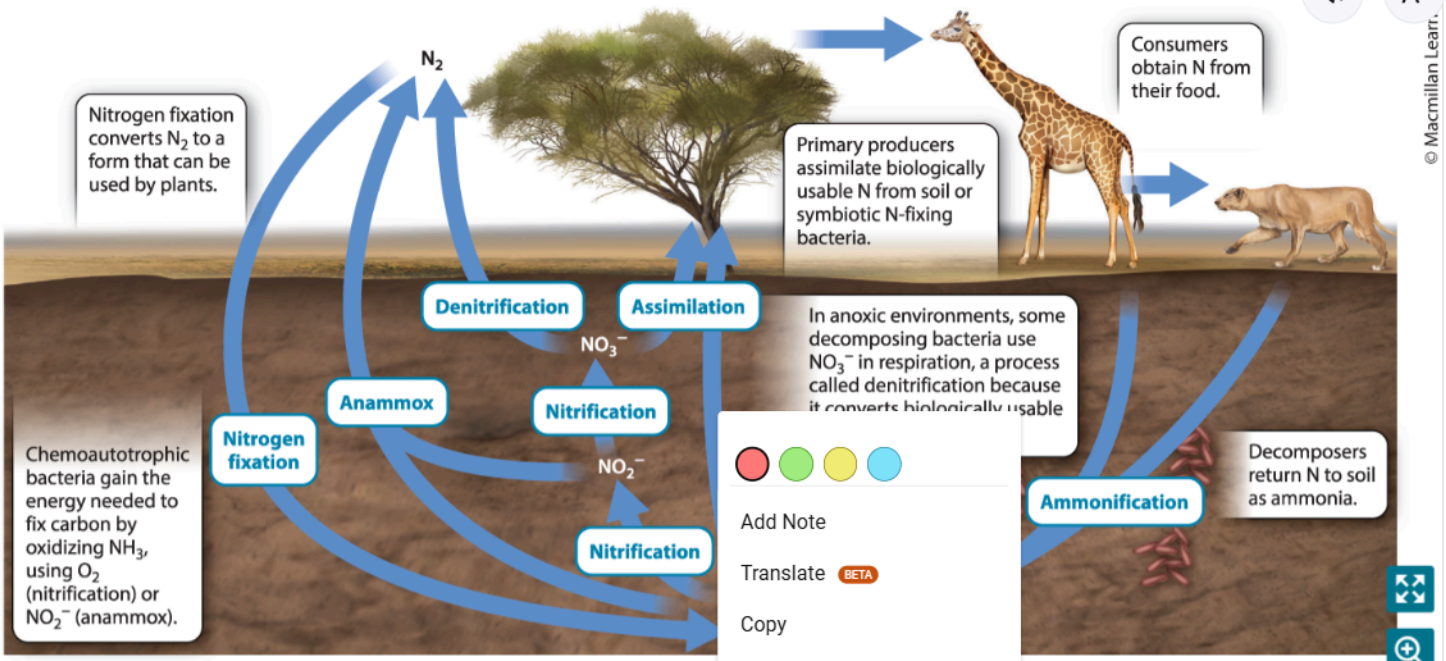

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