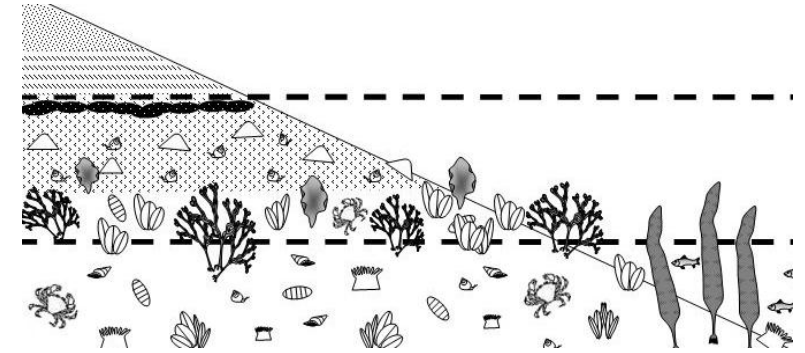


Stratification

- Vertical layers – strata - of plant species seen in forests communities.
- Different layers are occupied by different groups of species that prefer different conditions.



Community Patterns



Zonation

- Horizontal bands of species that change as you move across a particular habitat.
- Zonation is a result of constant change / gradient - found as some environmental factors change. e.g. zonation on the rocky shore community or as you move up a mountain.
- As the environmental conditions change – exceed the tolerance limits of a species, one species finishes and another adapted species takes over forming another zone. etc.

Succession

- Is the gradual process by which ecosystems change and develop over time. Nothing remains the same and habitats are constantly changing.
- It is rapidly colonised by the **pioneer** species which are adapted to thrive and compete best against other species in the existing conditions.
- As these conditions change the existing species will be replaced by a new set of species which are now better adapted.
- Each successive community will be better adapted to the changed environment provided by the previous community.
- Eventually a **climax** community is reached and succession will not go any further unless the environment changes.
- **Primary succession**; pioneer species colonise and modify a sterile environment (i.e. no plants at all), where the conditions are unfavourable for plant growth, e.g. bare rock created by volcanic activity,
- **Secondary succession**; Occurs after a disturbance (e.g. fire, flood) removes existing vegetation. The soil is already fertile, so plants can easily become established.

