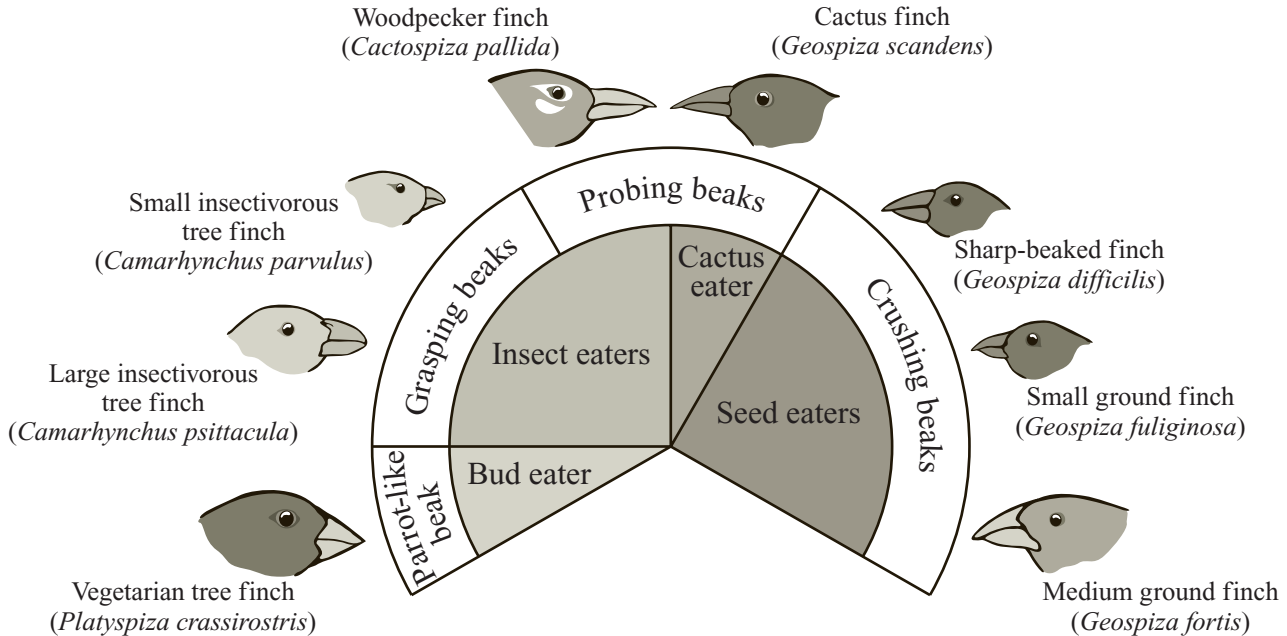


The Galápagos Islands are home to a group of bird species known as Darwin's finches. The diagram below shows eight of these finch species, organized according to the type of beak they have and their main source of food as adults.



Darwin's finches provide a classic example of the processes of evolution. Scientists have concluded that Darwin's finches evolved from a South American ancestor. The Galápagos Islands are located approximately 1000 km west of South America. These islands were never connected to the South American mainland or to each other. Scientists think that a small number of birds from the ancestral species must have either gotten lost or been blown to the islands by a storm. This original population then evolved on the islands, where there are many different niches and food sources.