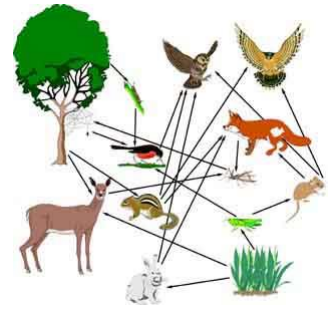


## Food Web Lesson Outline



**Grade Level:** 3-5

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**NGSS Connections:**

*PS3.D: Energy in Chemical Processes and Everyday Life*-The energy released [from] food was once energy from the sun that was captured by plants in the chemical process that forms plant matter (from air and water). (5-PS3-1)

*LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems*- The food of almost any kind of animal can be traced back to plants. Organisms are related in food webs in which some animals eat plants for food and other animals eat the animals that eat plants. Organisms can survive only in environments in which their particular needs are met. A healthy ecosystem is one in which multiple species of different types are each able to meet their needs in a relatively stable web of life. Newly introduced species can damage the balance of an ecosystem. (5-LS2-1)

**Essential Question:** How are salmon connected to forests?

**Materials:** Printed food chain cards, food chain visuals, food web recording sheet for each student

**Objectives: Students will be able to...**

1. Identify examples of producer, consumer, and decomposers
2. Organize a set of organisms into a food chain
3. Describe the cause and effect of adding and removing animals in a food web

**Vocabulary:** food chain, food web, producer, consumer, decomposer

**Introduction (15min):**

Write the essential question (the class goal) on the board to refer back to at end of class.

Introduce food chains by creating an example in the front of the classroom. Ask students to brainstorm local plants and animals that are part of the food chain starting with the sun. A group of students can line-up and hold the provided visuals to illustrate the different roles in a food chain. Build this chain one link at a time discussing how energy is moved (sun, producer, 1<sup>st</sup> consumer, 2<sup>nd</sup> consumer, tertiary consumer, and decomposer) until you complete food chain.

**Activity (25min)**

Pass out a set of food chain cards to each table (or group of 3/4 students) and a food web recording sheet to each student. Have small groups work together to put the cards into the food chain order, emphasizing that it will be important to read the clues on each card. The food chain should always start with the sun and end with decomposers. Next have students draw the chain on the web sheet. Switch cards with another group until each table group has completed 3 to 5 sets.

Younger students: It's helpful if students use a different color pen for each set of cards so they can easily differentiate between chains.

Older students: Try having students use a different color pen for each trophic level which illuminates that some animals can be within more than one trophic level depending on the chain.

**Wrap-up (10min):** Start with a few questions to get the conversation flowing.

Did any of the food chains surprise you? Were there food chains where your group disagreed about the order? Why?

Food chains are a simple way to see how plants and animals are connected...but in real life it's not so simple. In nature/ecosystems, plants and animals are connected through a complex food web where one plant or animal may be used by or connected to many other animals. Are there plants or animals on your recording sheet that have a lot of lines coming into or out of them? Which ones?

What would happen if we removed a few plants or animals?

Refer back to the essential question and have students brainstorm their answer/s in small groups.

How might helping plants or forests affect top (tertiary) consumers like mountain lions and eagles?

Why are humans included in the food chain/web?

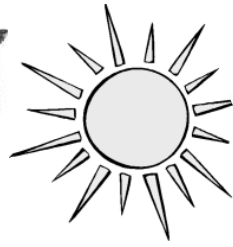
**Extension Ideas:** Brainstorm additional food chains and make new cards.

Write a short story about a food chain from their worksheet.

Think of a favorite food and try to trace it back to the sun.



Mosquito



Cattail



Salmonberry



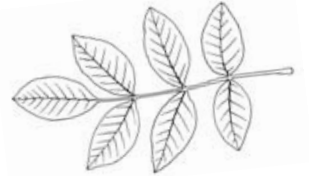
Willow



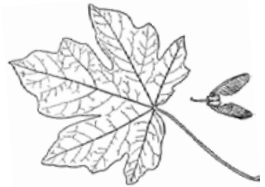
Algae



F.B.I

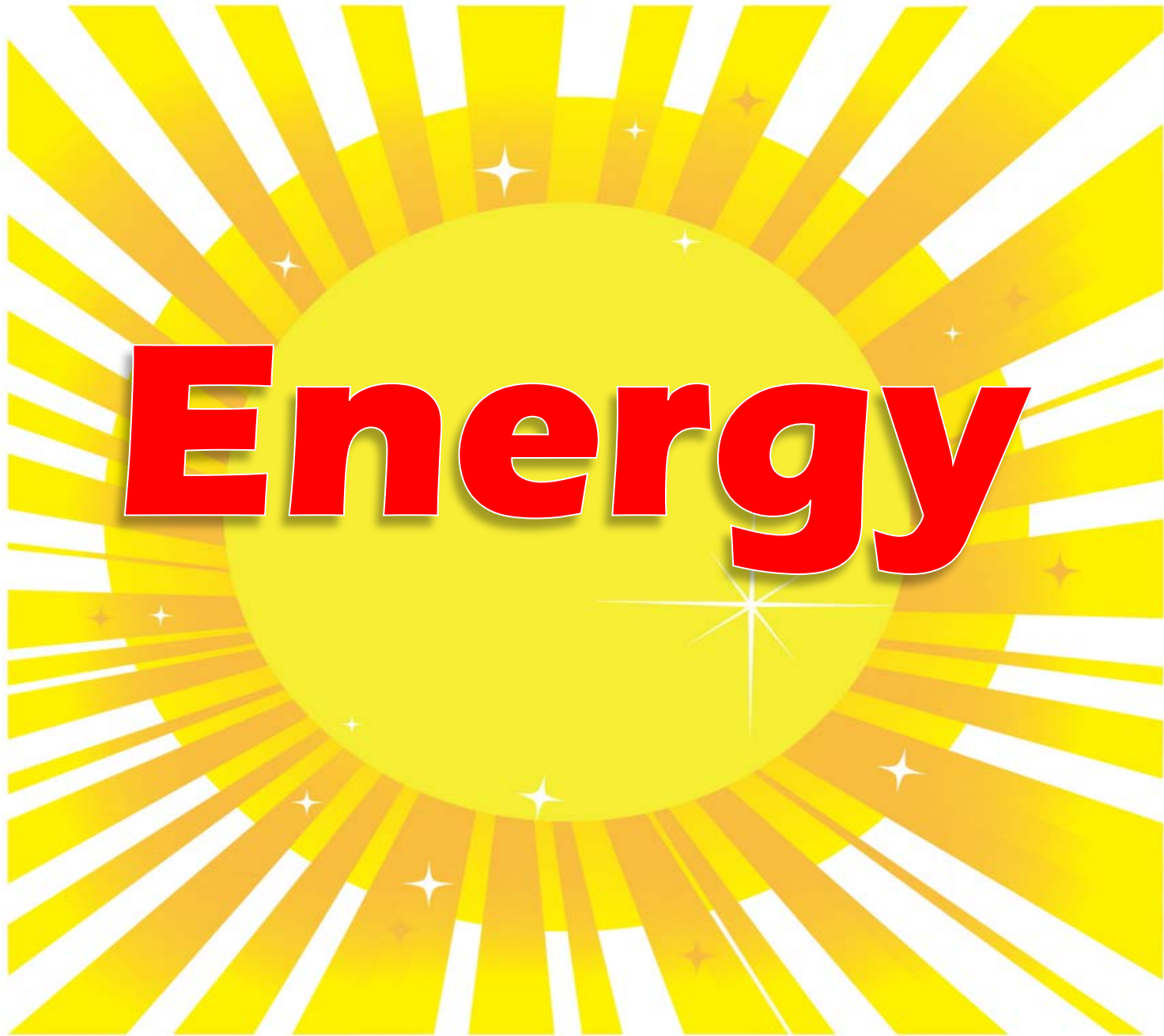


Oregon Ash



Maple





**Energy**



# Producer



**Primary**

**(1<sup>st</sup>)**



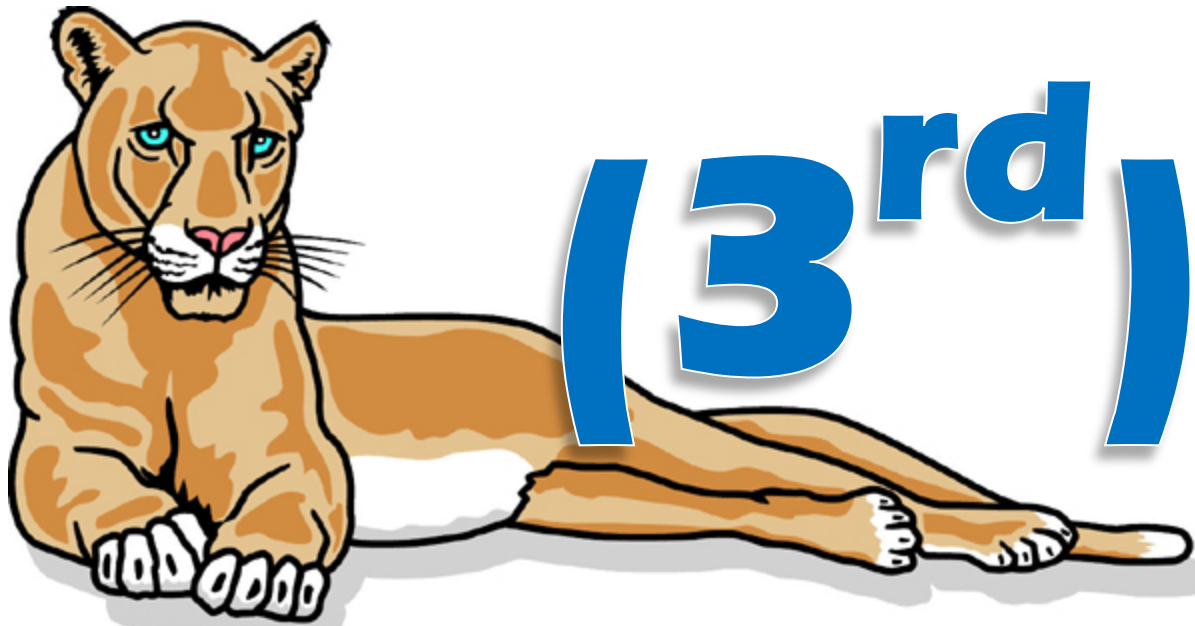
**Consumer**

# Secondary



# Consumer

# Tertiary



# Consumer



# Decomposer

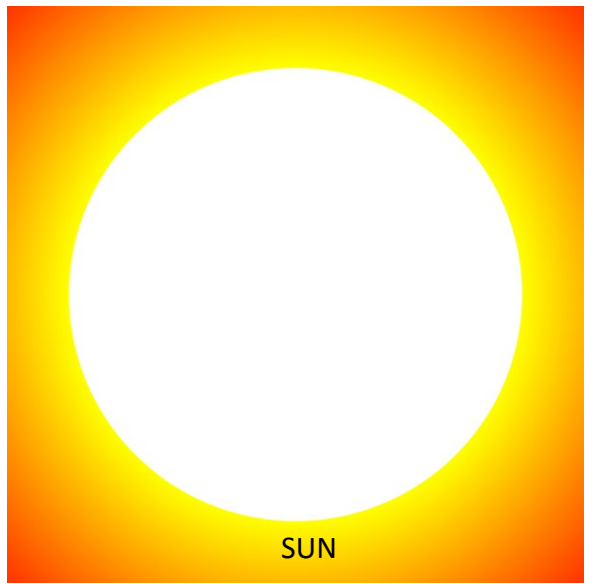
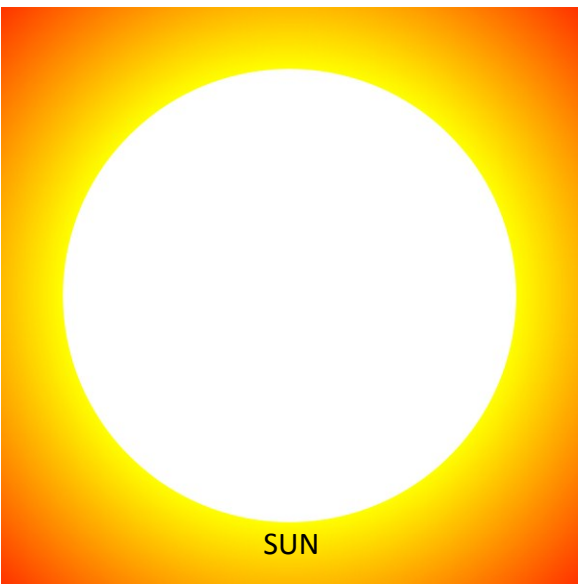
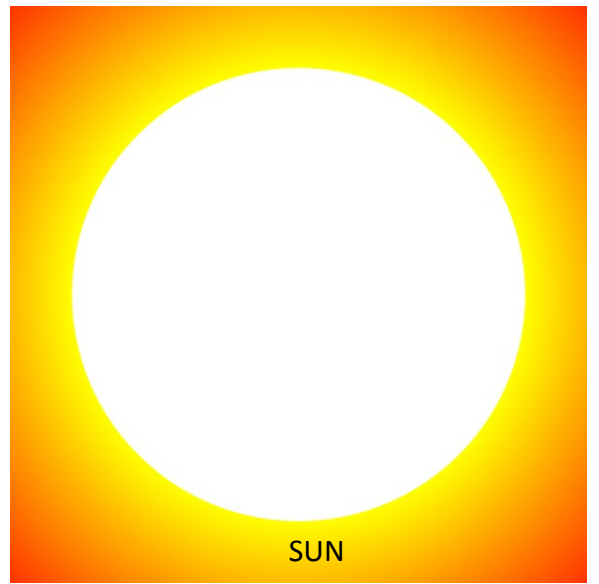
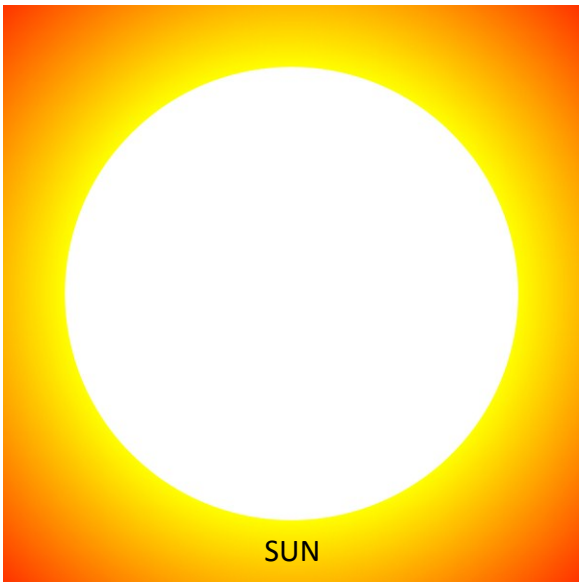
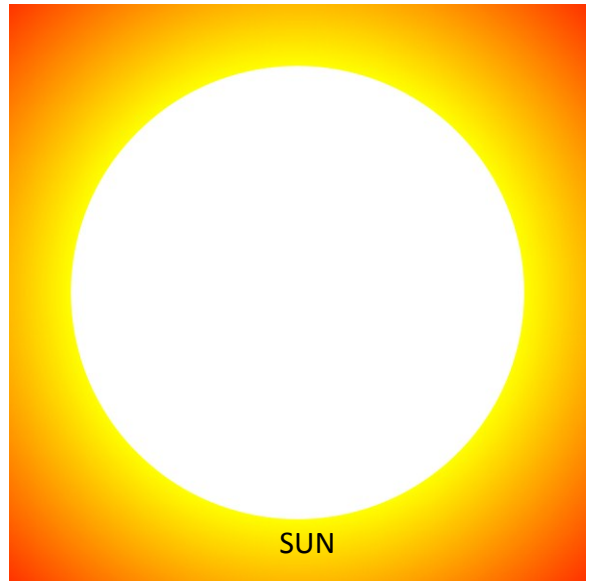
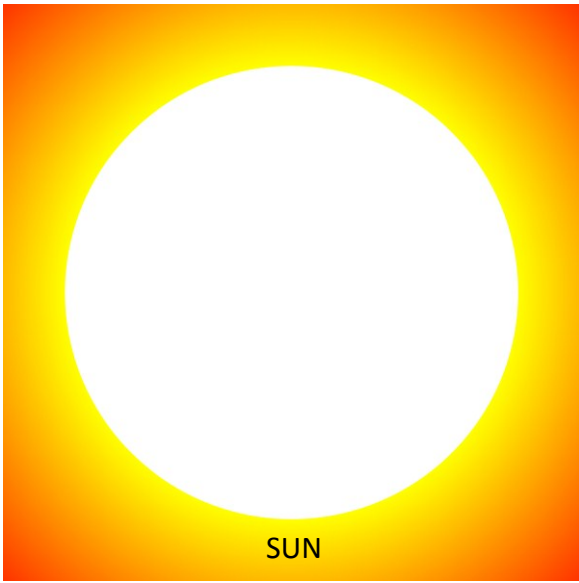


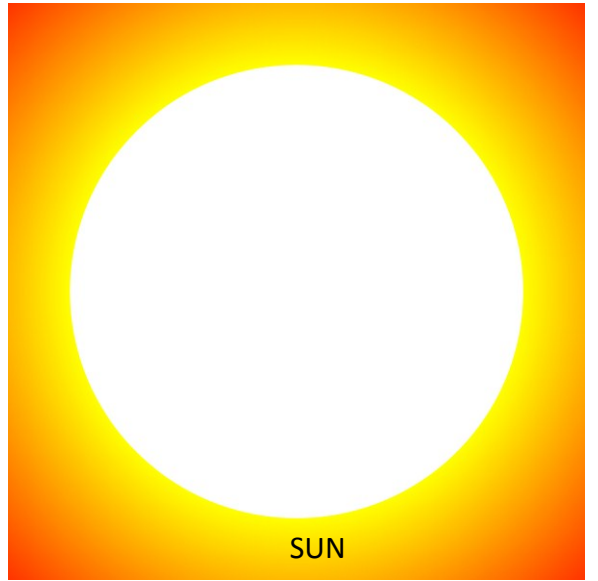
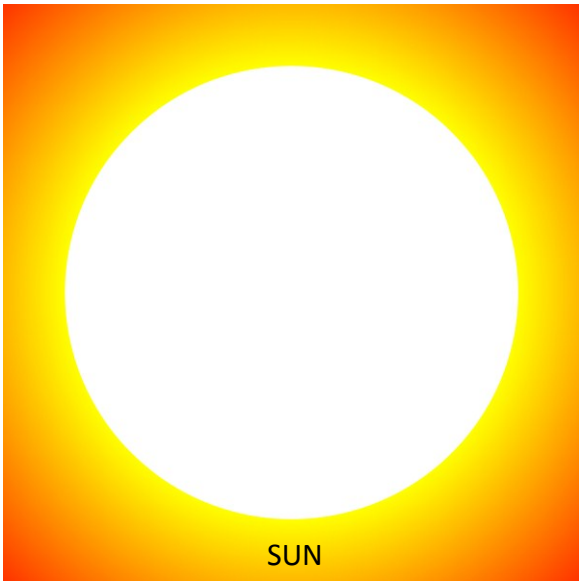
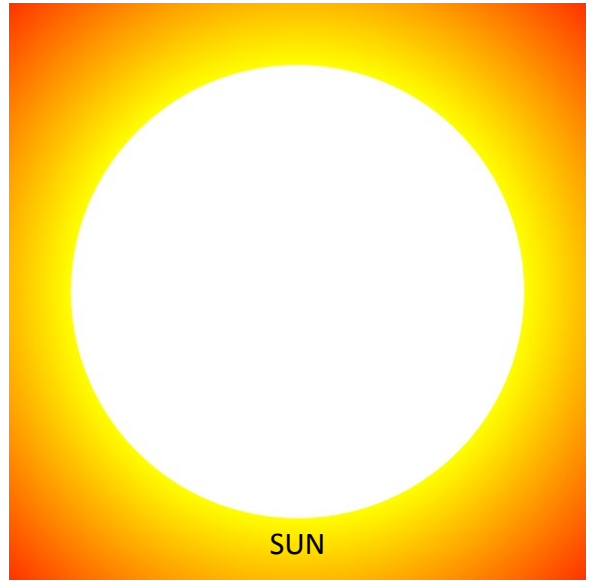
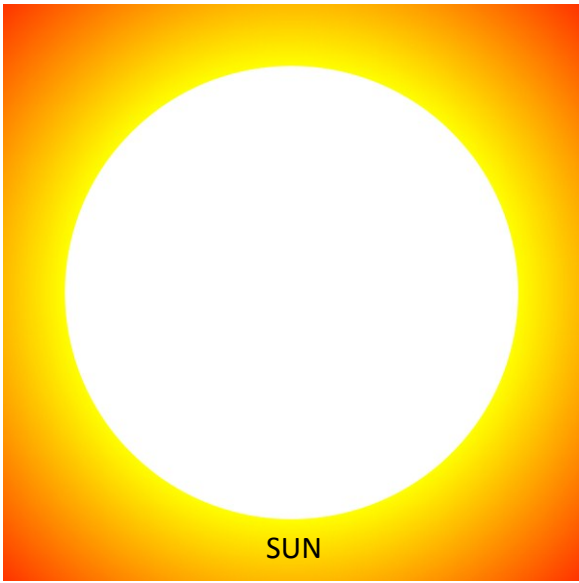
## FOOD WEB CARDS & ANSWER KEY

Directions: Print food web cards single-sided onto cardstock and cut into individual squares. Assemble into 8 groups according the answer key below. It is convenient to add the same number or colored dot to the back of each card in a group so they can be reassembled if groups get shuffled.

Food web cards answer key:

1	Sun	Willow	Caddisfly	Water Strider	Coho Salmon	Human	Decomposer
2	Sun	Algae	Snail	Rough Skinned Newt	Garter Snake	Raccoon	Decomposer
3	Sun	Cattail	Red-Winged Blackbird	Raccoon	Bald Eagle	Decomposer	
4	Sun	Oregon Ash	Caddisfly	Dragonfly	Little Brown Bat	Skunk	Decomposer
5	Sun	Salmonberry	Snail	Garter Snake	Great Blue Heron	Decomposer	
6	Sun	Salmonberry	Human	Mosquito	Dragonfly	Decomposer	
7	Sun	Big Leave Maple Tree	Deer Mouse	Great Horned Owl	Decomposers		
8	Sun	Cattail	Deer Mouse	Striped Skunk	Great Horned Owl	Decomposers	





### Caddisfly



**Food Value:** Herbivore. Larva eat algae and fallen plants. Adults eat flower nectar. Many fish, like salmon, eat the larva.

**Description:** Adult flies live less than one month. The larva build tiny houses of stick, stones, and leaves with beautiful patterns. Caddisfly larva are sensitive to poor water quality conditions.

**Habitat:** Most of their life is spent as larva in streams and ponds.

**★Fun Fact★:** Adult flies hold their wings over themselves like a roof when resting.

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### Big Leaf Maple Tree



**Food Value:** Many types of wildlife use this tree. Small mammals eat its seeds and deer and elk eat the twigs.

**Description:** It grows from 25 to 100 feet tall and 1 to 9 feet wide. The leaves are palm shaped and the seeds spin like helicopters when they fall.

**Habitat:** Grows in moist soils mixed with other trees.

**★Fun Fact★:** Maple flowers are quite sweet and edible and can be used in salads.



## Willow



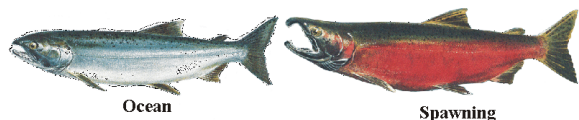
**Food Value:** Many types of wildlife eat the twigs and flowers of willow. Rabbit, mice and beaver eat their bark and deer and livestock eat their stems.

**Description:** Willow grows as a many-stemmed shrub or tree with heights between 6 and 40+ feet.

**Habitat:** Willows grow almost everywhere but are mainly found along streams and on wet ground.

**★Fun Fact★:** Willow bark has aspirin like properties used by Native Americans to cure many common illnesses.

## Coho Salmon



**Food Value:** Coho eat plankton, smaller fish and aquatic animals. Young Coho are food for other fish and birds. Adults are eaten by larger animals.

**Description:** During their life cycle their color changes from silver to red with blue-green backs. Their jaws become hook shaped when spawning.

**Habitat:** Adults live in the ocean and return to spawn in flowing streams with gravel bottoms. The young remain in the stream for 1 or 2 years before moving to the ocean.

**★Fun Fact★:** Adults usually weigh 8-12 pounds but Coho up to 31 pounds have been caught.

## Oregon Ash



**Food Value:** Many types of wildlife use this tree. Small mammals eat its seeds and deer and elk eat the twigs.

**Description:** It grows up to 80 feet tall and 3 feet wide across the trunk. They are easily identified by their seeds which are surrounded by a canoe-shaped wing.

**Habitat:** Grows in moist soils along streams and can survive in wet soil for long periods of time.

**★Fun Fact★:** Ash is the sportsman's wood. Baseball bats, skis, oars and axe handles and other wooden goods are made of ash.

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## Algae



**Food value:** Water bugs, snails and fish nibble on algae.

**Description:** Algae is a plantlike organism that lacks leaves, flowers, or stem.

**Habitat:** Algae can often be found underwater attached to logs and rocks.

**★Fun Fact★:** The oldest known fossil is of algae.

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## Garter Snake



**Food Value:** Garter snakes are carnivores who eat rodents, salamanders, slugs, frogs and ants. They are food for many other animals like birds and mammals.

**Description:** This snake ranges in color from red to yellow to white. Typically not longer than 24 inches.

**Habitat:** Garter snakes live on land, but are able to swim and often prefer to live near water.

**★Fun Fact★:** Garter snakes eat their prey whole and will go after anything they can overpower.

## Cattail



**Food Value:** Mice, muskrats, and beavers eat the roots and the seeds are eaten by birds.

**Description:** Long, tough, pointed leaves. The tiny flowers make up the “cat’s tail” which looks like a hot dog. Cattails provide shelter for many birds and insects.

**Habitat:** Forms large clumps in still water, such as wetlands.

**★Fun Fact★:** The soft seeds that make up the cattail were used by native Americans for bed stuffing.

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## Dragonfly



Larva



Adult

**Food Value:** Adults are predators that eat mosquitoes and other small insects. The larva prey on small animals in the water. Dragonfly are eaten by larger insects and animals.

**Description:** These insects are easy to identify by their huge eyes, long abdomen and four wings. Dragonfly larva also have long abdomens and large eyes and jaws.

**Habitat:** Adults live near water. Larva live on the bottoms of streams and ponds.

**★Fun Fact★:** Dragonflies are among the fastest insects in the world and can fly 60 mph!

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### Striped Skunk



**Food Value:** Skunks are omnivorous, eating plants and animals including insects, rodents, birds, berries and nuts. They may be eaten by larger predators such as eagles and cougar.

**Description:** Striped skunks are black with two white stripes. Adults weigh 6-8 pounds on average. Skunks are shy animals and mostly active at night.

**Habitat:** Found in most habitats including forests and grassy areas. They can also live in cities.

**★Fun Fact★:** Skunks spray their stinky musk only as a last resort. They make enough musk for 6 sprays a week.

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### Little Brown Bat



**Food Value:** Bats mainly eat insects and will fly over rivers and ponds capturing flying insects in the air. Bats may be eaten by larger predators like owls and raccoons.

**Description:** Bats are small winged mammals that fly at night and rest during the day.

**Habitat:** During the day bats hang upside down in dark places such as hollow trees, under rocks and caves.

**★Fun Fact★:** One small bat can eat 600+ mosquito-sized insects per hour!

### Mosquito



**Food Value:** Adult mosquitos eat plant nectar. Only females take a blood meal to help their eggs develop. Larva eat algae and plankton in the water.

**Description:** The adult mosquito has a long, tubular proboscis (like a straw) for sucking. Their larva are called 'wigglers' because they wriggle when they swim.

**Habitat:** Ponds, lakes, and puddles everywhere.

**★Fun Fact★:** Mosquitoes help pollinate some species of flowers.

**Snail**



**Food Value:** Snails usually eat plants, fruits, vegetables, and algae. Plants that are decaying are often a good meal for them. A few snail species are also predators. Snails are food for many animals, including fish, salamanders, turtles, water striders, and humans.

**Description:** Snails are easily identified by their spiral shell

**Habitat:** Freshwater and ocean habitats. Some snails live in moist places on land.

**★Fun Fact★:** Slugs are a kind of snail without a shell.

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**Rough-Skinned Newt**



**Food Value:** Newts eat insects, slugs, worms, snails and even small fish. They are only eaten by garter snakes.

**Description:** This newt grows to be 3.5-8 inches long (including their tail). They are dark brown on top and yellow-orange on their underside.

**Habitat:** Found on land or in the water in grasslands, forests, ponds and streams.

**★Fun Fact★:** Rough-skinned newts have a strong poison on their skin that stops predators from eating them, except the garter snake which has developed a tolerance to the poison.

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**Description:** This snake ranges in color from red to yellow to white. Typically not longer than 24 inches.

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**Raccoon**



**Food Value:** Raccoons eat a variety of food, including crayfish, fish, frogs, insects, plants, birds and their eggs. Raccoons are food for predator birds and mammals.

**Description:** This omnivore may weigh up to 35 pounds. They are easily recognized by their mask and striped tail.

**Habitat:** They live in areas near streams and lakes and in cities.

**★Fun Fact★:** Raccoons wash their food before eating. Their name means “wash one’s food”.

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**Pacific Tree Frog**



**Food Value:** Adult frogs eat spiders and insects while tadpoles eat plants. Frogs are food for birds, snakes, and raccoons. Tadpoles are food for insects, fish, salamanders, and other frogs.

**Description:** These frogs have long legs, rounded toe pads and a dark line from their nose to their shoulders. They can be green, grey, or brown and will camouflage with their surroundings.

**Habitat:** Any habitat near water. Look for them on grass or the bark of trees.

**★Fun Fact★:** Pacific Tree frog is the smallest amphibian on the west coast, growing to 3/4 -2 inches.

### Water Strider



**Food Value:** Water striders eat small living or dead insects and snails, using their sharp mouthpart to suck their prey's body juices. Fish eat water striders.

**Description:** Using their long legs and waterproof hairy feet, the water striders walk on the surface of the water.

**Habitat:** Common on the surface of lakes, ponds, and streams.

**★Fun Fact★:** Water striders communicate by sending ripples to each other on the water surface.

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### Great Blue Heron



**Food Value:** Herons eat fish, crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, and insects. Their eggs may be eaten by other predators.

**Description:** This heron has a gray-blue back and wings. It is about 4 feet tall and weighs about 7 pounds. Its wingspan is 6 feet.

**Habitat:** They live in fresh and saltwater habitats. They require tall trees or rock ledges for their nests.

**★Fun Facts★:** Herons often nest in groups called a "rookery" with 5 to 500 nests per group.

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## Bald Eagle



**Food Value:** Bald eagles are fish eaters but will also eat ducks, birds or any prey that is easy for them to catch. They will also eat dead animals.

**Description:** These large predators can be up to 3 feet tall and with a wingspan of 7 feet. Their head and tail feather turn white at about 5 years old.

**Habitat:** Found along the coast and on major lakes and rivers.

**★Fun Fact★:** Eagle eyes are the same size as a humans but their vision is at least 4 times better.

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## Deer Mouse



**Food:** Mice are omnivores. They eat seeds, plants, insects, and grubs. They are food for all kinds of carnivorous mammals and birds.

**Description:** Deer mice are named after their brown backs and white belly and legs. Like all mice in the Pacific Northwest they are 6-7 inches long, including their tail.

**Habitat:** Deer mice occupy any habitat where they can burrow or hide under grasses and shrubs.

**★Fun Fact★:** The deer mouse is the most abundant mammal in North America.

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## Human



**Food Value:** Humans are omnivores— they eat a variety of plants and animals. They are rarely preyed upon.

**Description:** These mammals are bipedal (on 2 legs). Every individual has a unique appearance.

**Habitat:** Humans are found virtually everywhere there is land.

**★Fun Fact★:** The human population is increasing by approximately 70 million people per year.

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## Osprey



**Food Value:** Osprey eat fish. Osprey young and adults may be preyed upon by eagles.

**Description:** A large predator with a 6 foot wing span. It has a greyish belly and head with a black eye patch and wings.

**Habitat:** They will nest in any location near water as long as there is a good supply of food.

**★Fun Fact★:** They have really flexible joints and can bend their wings to shield their eyes from the sun while flying.

## Great Horned Owl



**Food Value:** Great Horned Owls eat a wide variety of prey including mice, skunks, birds, other owls, large insects, and fish.

**Description:** A powerful owl with a wingspan up to 4 feet. They are greyish-brown and have large tufts on their head.

**Habitat:** They are found in woodlands, meadows, farmlands and city parks.

**★Fun Fact★:** Great Horned Owls have 3 to 5 times more crushing power in their talons (feet) than an adult man has in his hands.

## Red-Winged Blackbird



**Food Value:** Blackbirds feed mostly on seeds in the spring and fall and insects in the summer.

**Description:** Male blackbirds are black with red shoulders. Females are brown and camouflaged.

**Habitat:** Marshes and swamps are home to this bird. They like to build their nests in stands of cattail.

**★Fun Fact★:** Males will fiercely defend their territory, attacking nest predators and even going after larger animals like horses and humans.

## Salmonberry



**Food Value:** The flowers are a favorite of hummingbirds and butterflies. Birds, mammals and insects eat the fruit.

**Description:** Salmonberry's thorny, woody stems grow up to 10 ft. high. Flowers are magenta and the berries are orange to bright red.

**Habitat:** Salmonberry grows in spots that are sunny or a little shady, in moist woods and along stream banks.

**★Fun Fact★:** The tart berries are excellent raw or cooked into jam or pie.

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**★Fun Fact★:** The tart berries are excellent raw or cooked into jam or pie.

## Great Horned Owl



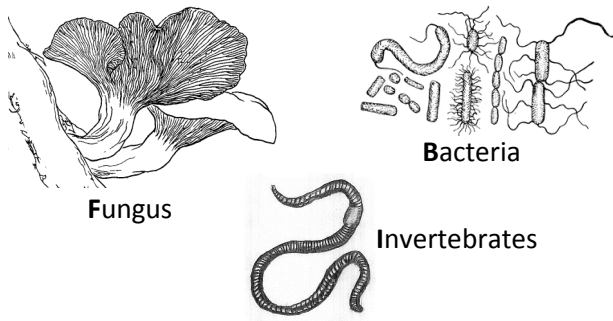
**Food Value:** Great Horned Owls eat a wide variety of prey including mice, skunks, birds, owls, large insects, and fish.

**Description:** A powerful owl with a wingspan up to 4 feet. They are greyish-brown and have large tufts on their head.

**Habitat:** Found in woodlands, meadows, farmlands and city parks.

**★Fun Fact★:** Great Horned Owls have 3 to 5 times more crushing power in their talons (feet) than an adult man has in his hands.

### Decomposers (F.B.I.)



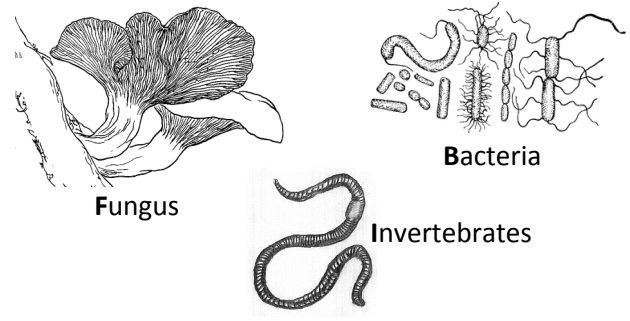
**Food Value:** Decomposers break down dead plants and animals. They also break down the waste of other organisms.

**Description:** Includes insects, mushrooms, worms and bacteria.

**Habitat:** Decomposers live everywhere you find plants and animals.

**★Fun Fact★:** If decomposers did not exist, within a month the earth would be covered in a layer of dead flies almost 20 feet deep!

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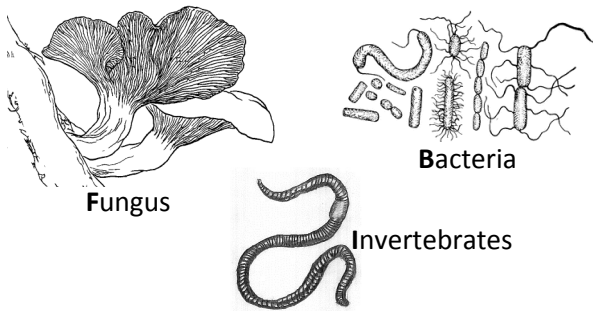
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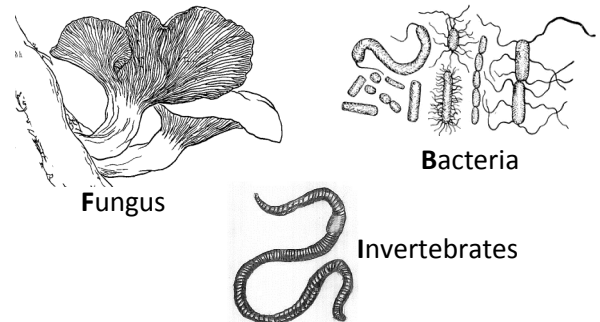
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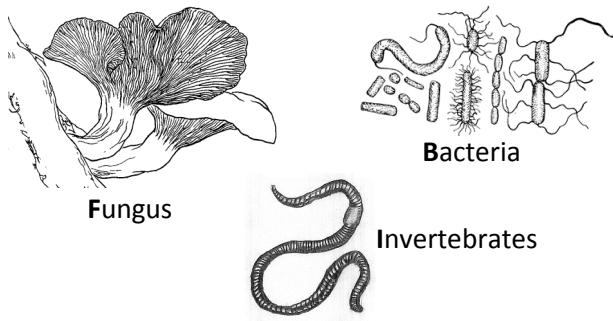
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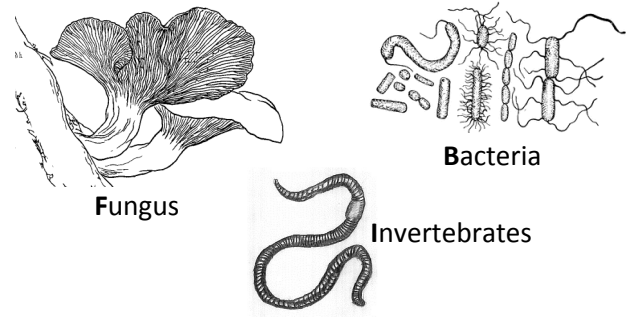
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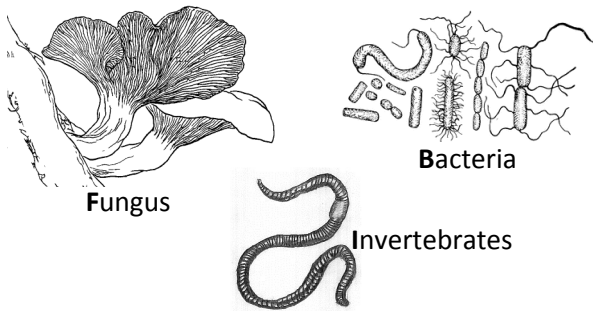
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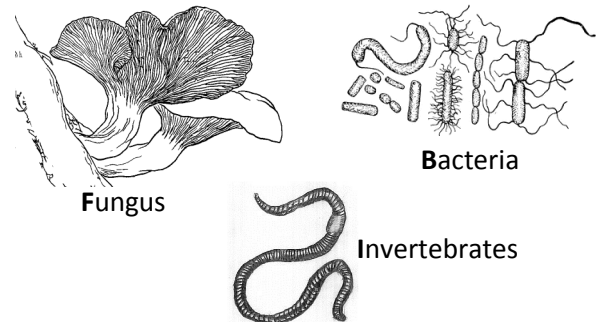
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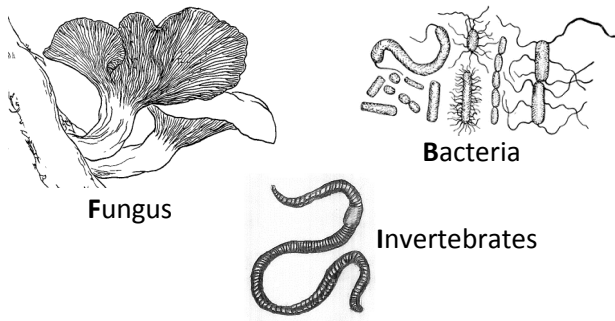
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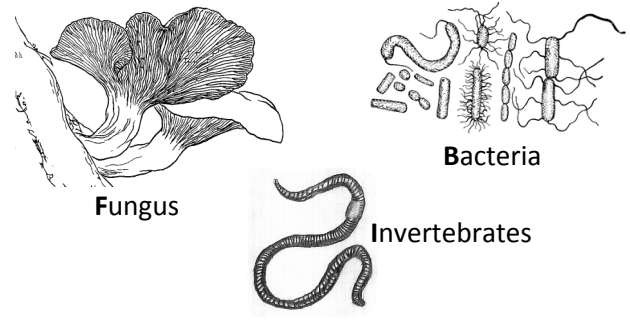
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