

World Wide Webs

How do food webs show energy connections?

Active Reading

14 Identify Underline the type of organism that typically forms the base of the food web.

Few organisms eat just one kind of food. So, the energy and nutrient connections in nature are more complicated than a simple food chain. A **food web** is the feeding relationships among organisms in an ecosystem. Food webs are made up of many food chains.

The next page shows a coastal food web. Most of the organisms in this food web live in the water. The web also includes some birds that live on land and eat fish. Tiny algae called phytoplankton form the base of this food web. Like plants on land, phytoplankton are producers. Tiny consumers called zooplankton eat phytoplankton. Larger animals, such as fish and squid, eat zooplankton. At the top of each chain are top predators, animals that eat other animals but are rarely eaten. In this food web, the killer whale is a top predator. Notice how many different energy paths lead from phytoplankton to the killer whale.

Visualize It!

15 Apply Complete the statements to the right with the correct organism names from the food web.



Energy flows up the food web when _____ eat puffins.

Puffins are connected to many organisms in the food web.

Puffins get energy by eating _____,

and _____.