
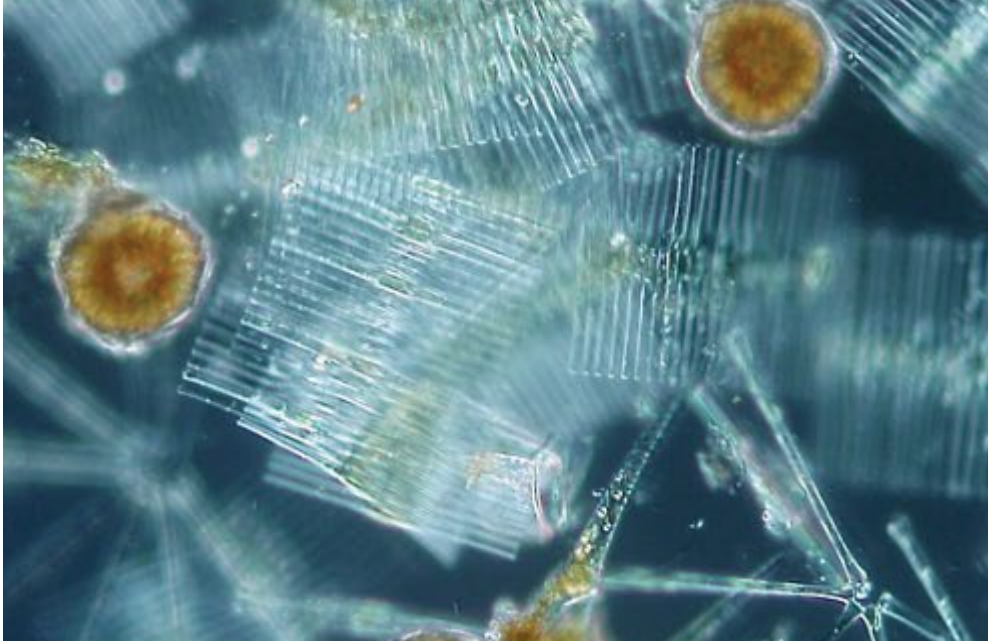



Phytoplankton

 South Carolina
Aquarium




Pond snail

 South Carolina
Aquarium




Bluespotted sunfish

 South Carolina
Aquarium



Tadpole

 South Carolina
Aquarium



Pond snail

(Primary Consumer)

Eastern pond snails are freshwater snails that live in ponds, lakes and marshes. The tan shell can grow up to 2 inches. The body is inside the shell for protection. Snails eat mostly plants like phytoplankton, algae, cattails and lily pads. Predators of pond snails include fish, herons, ducks, eels, some amphibians (salamanders and newts), muskrats and raccoons.

Phytoplankton

(Producer)

Phytoplankton are microscopic plants that use the sun's energy to create sugars for food energy and oxygen (photosynthesis). This producer is consumed by a variety of animals such as tadpoles, snails, insects and even small fish.

Tadpole

(Primary Consumer)


Bullfrog tadpoles can grow 4 to 6 inches before turning into frogs. Tadpoles usually eat plants but are also known to consume aquatic insects. Predators include medium and large fish, turtles, water birds, baby alligators, raccoons and water snakes.

Bluespotted sunfish - small fish

(Primary or Secondary Consumer)


Bluespotted sunfish are small freshwater fish that can grow up to 4 inches. They have tiny mouths for eating small crustaceans, insects and plants. Bluespotted sunfish are most commonly found in sluggish waters like swamps, ponds, streams and roadside ditches.

Water strider

 South Carolina
Aquarium




Chicken turtle

 South Carolina
Aquarium




Bluegill

 South Carolina
Aquarium



Bullfrog

 South Carolina
Aquarium



Chicken turtle

(Secondary Consumer)

This freshwater turtle can grow to 10 inches and will eat a variety of organisms such as plants, snails, tadpoles, worms, fish and insects. Chicken turtles are prey items for raccoons, herons, snapping turtles, foxes, hawks, crows, snakes, bullfrogs, largemouth bass and bald eagles. This turtle has a dark, yellow-lined top shell and yellow bottom shell. The front legs have broad yellow bands.

Water strider - insect

(Primary Consumer)

Many insects like the water strider consume tiny plants and animals (phytoplankton and zooplankton) in their aquatic habitat. Water striders can be spotted on still or slow-moving water throughout the U.S. Predators include small and medium carnivorous fish, frogs, salamanders, newts, crayfish and birds.

Bullfrog

(Secondary Consumer)


The bullfrog is the largest frog in North America, growing up to 8 inches. Bullfrogs like to ambush their prey and eat just about anything that they can fit in their mouths such as insects, crayfish, worms, fish, other frogs, small turtles, baby birds, small mammals and even snakes. Bullfrogs have to look out for predators like herons, largemouth bass, raccoons, owls, hawks, snakes, muskrats, opossums, turtles, otters and bald eagles.

Bluegill - medium fish

(Secondary Consumer)


Bluegills are medium-sized freshwater fish that can grow up to 16 inches. They often eat insects, crayfish, snails and smaller fish. Bluegills are food to many other larger animals including larger fish, otters, muskrats, birds of prey and turtles. Bluegills have a greenish color on the back and sides, and are often black on the caudal (tail) fin.

Crayfish

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Aquarium




Black rat snake

 South Carolina
Aquarium




Raccoon

 South Carolina
Aquarium



Largemouth bass

 South Carolina
Aquarium



Black rat snake

(Secondary or Tertiary Consumer)

Black rat snakes are found in forests, fields and marshes, and around freshwater sources like lakes, rivers and ponds. Rat snakes are powerful constrictors and can eat birds, eggs, lizards, frogs and small mammals like mice, squirrels and shrews. Rat snakes are skillful climbers, using that adaptation to search for eggs in nests to eat. Predators include eagles, hawks, owls, raccoons, foxes and bobcats.

Crayfish

(Secondary Consumer or Decomposer)

Crayfish can be found in nearly any body of fresh water that isn't polluted. They often hide under rocks in the water. They are nocturnal hunters and will eat both plants and animals including dead organisms. They are known to consume worms, insects, tadpoles and eggs from fish, frogs and salamanders. Crayfish predators include raccoons, opossums, muskrats, foxes, owls, hawks, medium and large fish, turtles, snakes and otters.

Largemouth bass - large fish

(Secondary or Tertiary Consumer)


Largemouth bass can grow more than 2 feet long and live in lakes, ponds, reservoirs, large rivers and slow-moving streams. These freshwater fish will hide among plants or in shadows to shield themselves from unsuspecting prey. They mostly eat smaller fish, but will also eat frogs, crayfish, large aquatic insects and insects on the surface of the water. Largemouth bass have to look out for predators like great blue herons, snapping turtles, bald eagles and river otters.

Raccoon

(Secondary or Tertiary Consumer)

Raccoons are nocturnal mammals that love to live in the hollows of trees near sources of fresh water. They are omnivores and eat a diet including berries, nuts, leaves, grasshoppers, worms, large insects, frogs, salamanders, snails, clams, crayfish, snakes, turtles and eggs of reptiles and birds. Younger raccoons must watch out for predators like hawks, owls, eagles, foxes, bears and alligators.

Sun


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Aquarium



Decomposers



River otter

 South Carolina
Aquarium



Bald eagle



Decomposers

Decomposers are organisms that break down dead plants and animals for energy. Fungi, bacteria and many invertebrates (worms, beetles, crabs and several more) are examples of decomposers.

Sun

The sun is the source of energy. It provides heat and light energy to the earth. Plants use this energy to make their own food (photosynthesis).

Bald eagle

(Tertiary or Apex Consumer)

Bald eagles are birds of prey that have brown bodies with bright white heads and tail feathers. Raccoons and other scavengers may target eagle eggs for food. Humans are by far the largest threat to bald eagles. Bald eagles are skilled hunters that primarily prey on fish, although they will also target small mammals such as rabbits, deer fawns, smaller birds such as ducks and geese, and even reptiles and amphibians.

River otter

(Tertiary or Apex Consumer)

River otters are mammals with long bodies, webbed toes with claws and thick coats of brown fur. River otters live in aquatic habitats like rivers, mountain streams and tidal creeks, where they eat fish, crayfish, crabs, turtles, amphibians and even bird eggs. Young otters are food for bobcats, eagles and alligators. Adult otters are considered apex consumers in most habitats.