
Food chain, food web

Food chain and food web

Food chain

A series or sequence of links showing how **nutrients** and **energy pass from one organism to another** is called **food chain**. All food chains **start** from **producers i.e. plants**.

Plants are called **producers** as they **make food** with the help of sunlight, water, carbon dioxide and nutrients from the soil.

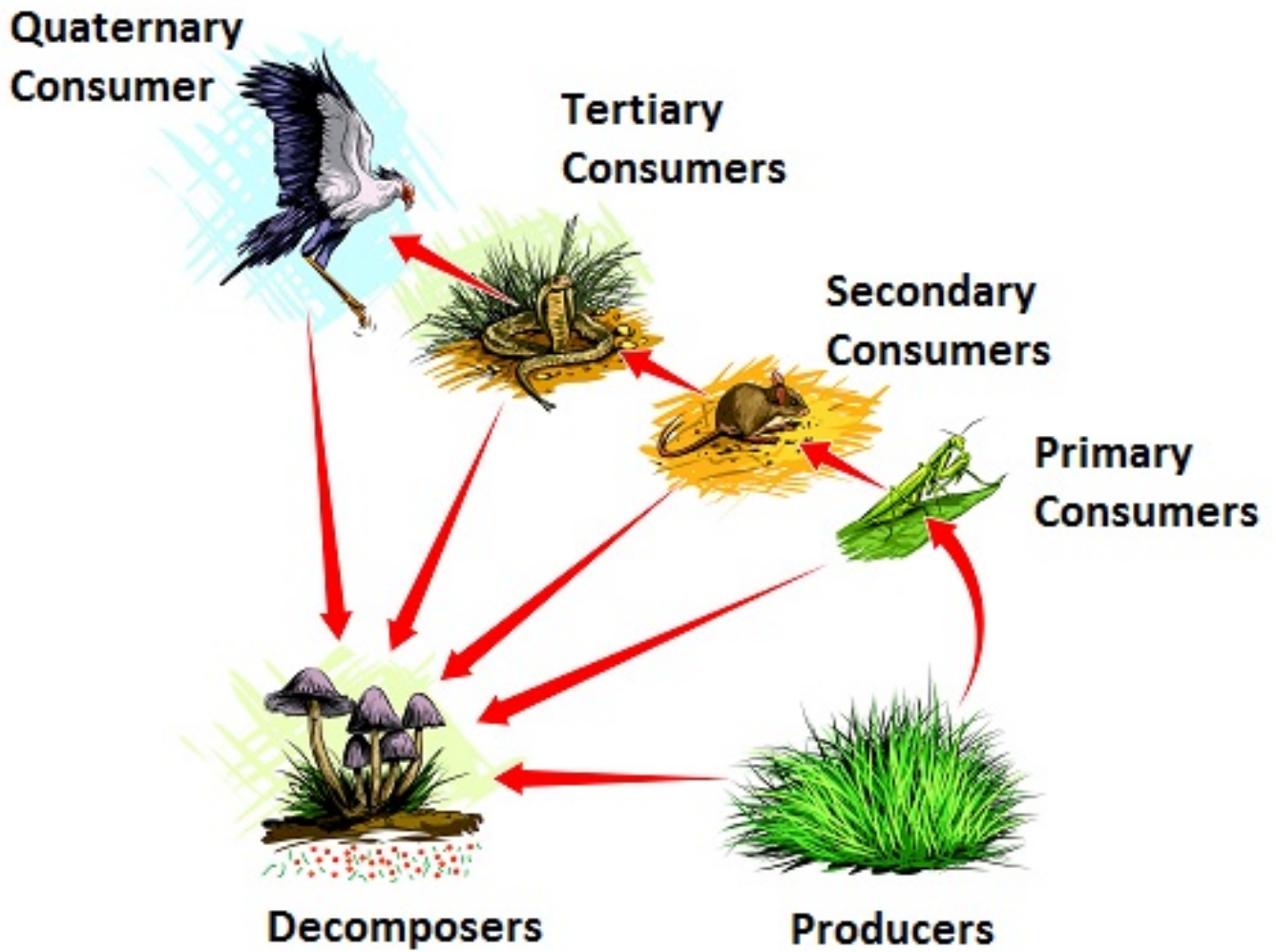
Animals like **deer, grain-eating birds, rats** etc are called **primary consumers** as they **primarily consume plants**. Thus primary consumers are mostly herbivorous or omnivorous.

Flesh-eating animals like snakes, lions etc are called **secondary consumers** as they eat primary consumers.

There could be a third link of consumers in some food chains called Tertiary consumers. Tertiary consumers eat secondary consumers. e.g. Eagle eats snake

Scavengers like **hyena, vultures, crows** etc feed on dead animals and they break down organic matter into smaller pieces.

Decomposers like **bacteria, fungi, mushrooms, termites** etc feed on organic matter and break them further. Nutrients are returned to the soil to be again used by plants. **A food chain ends with a decomposer.**



Food web

A network of **interconnected food chains** is called **food web**.

