

Trophic Levels

All organisms in all ecosystems are part of a food chain and a food web. In marine food webs, the primary producers (at the bottom of the food chain) are organisms like phytoplankton and seaweed, those species that convert sunlight into energy through photosynthesis. Zooplankton are primary consumers, eating the phytoplankton and seaweed. At the next stage up are the first level carnivores, such as the juvenile stages of fish and jellyfish, and small fish, sea stars and crustaceans. The second level carnivore consumers are at the next level, and include larger fish. The third level carnivorous consumers include organisms like squid, while the top level carnivores include sharks, dolphins and albatross.

