Food Webs Key



Oceanography UC San Diego

Food Web Questions:

1. What organism in our food web is the producer?

Phytoplankton

2. What animal or animals would be considered top predators in the food web you created?

The orca and pelican are not eaten by any other animals that we included in this food web.

3. What would happen to the rest of the food web if the mackerel disappeared because of disease or overfishing?

If the mackerel disappeared, there would be affects lower and higher in the food web. There may be more zooplankton because there aren't as many animals eating them. This may cause a decrease in phytoplankton numbers. The smelt and squid populations may increase because there will be more zooplankton, but also because the mackerel aren't eating them. The leopard sharks may have more squid to eat. The pelicans and sea lions will start eating more smelt because their other food, the mackerel, is gone. The orcas will not be as affected because they eat different animals. A follow-up question to the students: Why do they think the mackerel would disappear? Answer will vary, but can include overfishing, disease, or a change in the food web.

4. Where would humans be in this food web?

Humans would be a top predator, as they eat squid, mackerel, smelt, and even larger zooplankton like krill.

