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| **Sun**I am the sun. *Everything* on earth depends onme. And in my hands I hold the web of life. | **Water**I am water. *All living things* need me tosurvive. Saltwater from ocean tides andfreshwater from the rain and snowmelt bring me to mudflats. |
| **Air**I am air. I am made up of oxygen and nitrogen.I am very important to *all living things*. It isimportant to keep me clean because pollutionin the air is harmful to all creatures. | **Mud**I am ***mud***, a type of soil. ***Eelgrass***uses the nutrients in me togrow. When living things die, ***bacteria*** decomposes themand return their nutrients to me. Aquatic worms like the ***clam worms*** and lug worms consume me to dig burrows and leave their castings besides their entrance holes. |
| **Phytoplankton**I am phytoplankton. I use ***sunlight***to producemy own food. Many different organisms like to eat me, including ***zooplankton, amphipods,*** and ***copepods.*** | **Zooplankton**I am ***zooplankton***. I like to eat ***detritus,******Phytoplankton,*** and other ***zooplankton***. I am eaten by lots of different animals, including ***amphipods***and ***copepods***. |
| **Detritus**I am detritus--dead plant material. When Iwas a live plant, I used ***sunlight***to producemy own food. When I died, I decomposed intoa material that feeds lots of other animals.***phytoplankton, zooplankton, worms, clams****,* and***starry flounder***depend on me for food. | **Eelgrass**I am eelgrass. I use ***sunlight*** to produce my own food and need ***mud*** as soil for my roots to grow in.Not many animals can digest me but when I die, I decompose into ***detritus*** which provides food for many other animals. |

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| **Copepod**I am a ***copepod***, a small crustacean with a shell. I’m one of the most abundant animals in the ocean during spring and summer. I eat ***phytoplankton*** and ***detritus***.Juvenile ***salmon*** eat me. | **Macoma Clam**I am a ***Macoma clam***. I filter water through my short siphon to eat ***detritus***. I also consume ***mud*** as I burrow down into it.Many different kind of birds eat me whole during migration, including ducks, ***western sandpipers*** and other shorebirds. On the beach during spring, your may see piles of pink shells that passed through their bodies. ***Starry flounders*** nip off and eat my siphon. |
| **Clam Worm**I am a ***clam worm***. I eat ***Macoma clams*** and other, smaller worm. ***Western sandpipers*** and ***gulls*** eat me. I live inthe wet ***mud*** along the shoreline. | **Amphipod**I am an **amphipod**, or beach hopper. I feed mostly on **detritus** from decaying seaweed and **eelgrass**. Shorebirds like***plovers***pick through washed up seaweedand ***eelgrass*** along the edges of the mudflat in search of me. |
| **Fat Innkeeper Worm**I’m a ***fat innkeeper worm*** that lives in a U-shaped burrow in the ***mud*** or muddy sand. I cast a slime net then swallow it to catch and eat ***detritus*** and ***bacteria***.***Starry flounders*** eat me. Other types of animals like scaleworms and pea crabs also live in my burrow, eating my crumbs and hiding out from predators. | **Western Sandpiper**I am a **Western sandpiper**. I’m usually the most plentiful shorebird stopping over in mudflats as I migrate along the Alaska coast. I probe in the mud for ***Macoma clams*** that are close to the surface and ***clam worms***. I also eat ***bacteria*** in the ***slime***, or biofilm, in the thin layer on the top of the mud.***Gulls*** sometimes eat my eggs. During migration, we travel in flocks and swirl around in the air when a hawk or peregrine falcon predator shows up.  |
| **Gull**I am a gull. I eat **clam worms**, **western sandpiper** eggs, and scavenge dead animals.**People** eat my eggs and predatory birds like bald eagles eat me and my eggs. | **Salmon**I am a ***salmon***. As a smolt adjusting to living in salt water, I stay close to shore over mudflats. I eat ***phytoplankton, zooplankton,amphipods***, and ***copepods.***When I return to the estuary and stream from the ocean as an adult, ***people*** eat me. |
| **Starry Flounder** I am a ***starry flounder***. I stay close to shore during summer where it’s sandy or muddy. I feed on ***detritus*** and eat **Fat Innkeeper Worms**.***People*** and marine mammals eat me. | **Bacteria**I am ***bacteria***. I colonize ***detritus*** and consume dead organic matter, then break it down into the minerals needed by producers like ***phytoplankton, sedges*,** and ***goose-tongue*** to make their own food. The ***animals that eat detritus*** also eat me |
| **Slime**I may be slime but I’m important in the mudflat food web. I’m really a mix of tiny ***bacteria*** who create the slime as their biofilm habitat as a thin layer on top of the mud. Fat innkeeper worms also use me to capture their food.Shorebirds like the **western sandpiper** slurp up biofilms and eat me.  |  **Human Being**I am a human being. I’m at the top of the food chain. I eat ***salmon, starry flounders***, ***plovers,*** and ***gull eggs***.  |