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| **Sun** I am the sun. *Everything* on earth depends on  me. And in my hands I hold the web of life. | **Water** I am water. *All living things* need me to  survive. Saltwater from ocean tides and  freshwater 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 is  important to keep me clean because pollution  in 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 produce  my 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 I  was a live plant, I used ***sunlight***to produce  my own food.  When I died, I decomposed into  a 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 in  the 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***. |