

Links In The Chain

Most of us know animals need energy and many raw materials in order to grow and develop and to carry out their life processes. Although animals gain vitamins and warmth from sunlight, they cannot capture and use the light energy from the sun directly. They must get their energy and raw materials by eating plants or other animals that have eaten plants. Only plant materials can transform the sun's energy into a form useful to consumers—the animals feeding on plants.

There is a wide range of plant material on land. Leaves, grasses, roots, bark, sap, flowers, fruits, nuts, nectar, and seeds are some of the materials available to the consumers. Along the seashore, the waters contain lichens, seaweeds, and phytoplankton for the plant materials. Also, some of the material from land plants accumulates in the water as food for sea creatures.

Plant materials form the basic link in the food chain. Animals that feed on plant materials, like cows, rabbits and snails, are called herbivores. Animals feeding mainly on other animals are called carnivores. Omnivores are the animals that feed on both plant and animal materials.

Some examples of herbivores are weevils, caterpillars, bees, beetles and other insects, rabbits, mice, seed-eating birds, and horses. Some of the carnivores are toads and frogs,

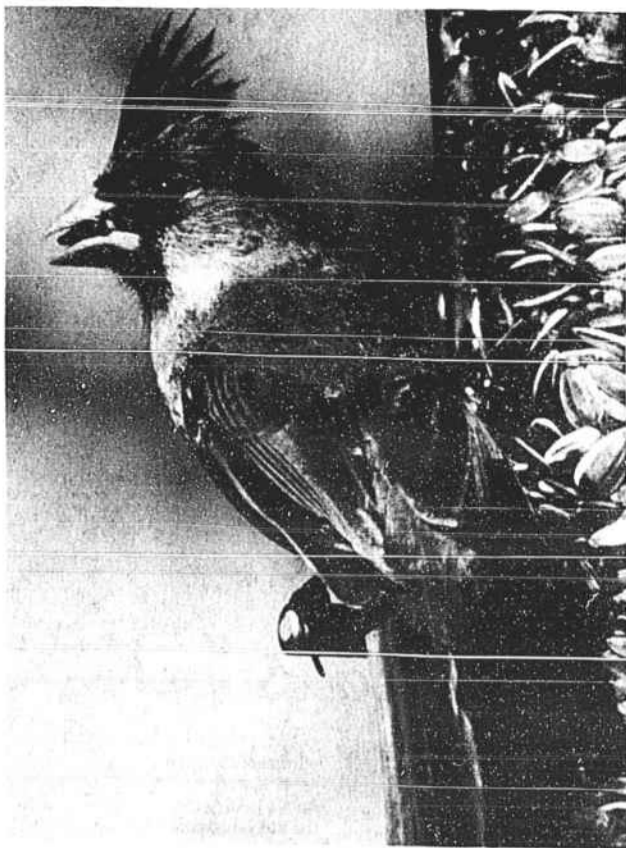


Bill Faver

spiders, cats and dogs, hawks, owls, gulls, crabs, fish, and herons. Omnivores include some of the warblers, shrimp, fanworms, barnacles, sponges, herring gulls and many other birds.

We can think of each plant or animal as a link in the food chain. When a snail feeds on a thistle we have a two-link food chain. If a bird eats the snail, we get a three-link food chain, and it becomes a four-link chain if a hawk eats the bird. Another four-link chain happens when zooplankton (animal) eats phytoplankton (plant) and mackerel eats zooplankton and man eats mackerel.

It's easy to visualize food chains for large animals. Think about the small ones—insects, worms and sea critters—and see if you can construct food chains for them. Such an effort helps us appreciate our surroundings and understand some of the effects of pollution and overuse on our resources.



CARDINALS eat seeds, worms, and insects and can be two-link or three-link consumers in the food chain.

Letters (Continued from Preceding Page)

portion of college educated voters in the country are represented by Republicans.

In fact, the top seven districts are all represented by GOP members. The only Democratic district is the 8th, California; wouldn't you know it, that district includes the Berkeley area represented by Ron Dellums. Enough said?

Robert Sellers
Shallotte

From One Small Voice: 'Hoorah'

To the editor:
I would like to offer one small voice

in a great hoorah to Sandy Pigott for her letter in the April 28 issue of The Brunswick Beacon. Her thoughts could have been mine, but I'm ashamed to admit, like so many, I sat back, silent, allowing myself to go uncouncted in the cry against abortion.

I would like to correct that now and join Sandy in her pleas to cry stop to these abortions. What a sad commentary on our great country that our priorities are with saving the dolphins and sacrificing the lives of those unwanted tiny human beings, who would have been born in the image and likeness of God.

Helen Spengler
Shallotte

Brief Notes From Subscribers

To the editor:
Enjoy the Beacon and keeping up with all the news. Ocean Isle is our second home and a big part of our lives. So keep the Beacon coming. Here is our check for another year.

Carlene Hedrick
Kernersville

Look forward to receiving the paper each Friday in the mail. Helps us keep abreast of all that is happening around our future retirement home.

Dick and Ellie Buttner
Hendersonville

Best In History

To the editor:
Thank you so much for your cooperation with our efforts during National Library Week (April 17-23). With your help, we feel that we had the best National Library Week in the history of West Brunswick High School.

Our students were involved, our teachers were supportive, and it was a learning experience for all of us.

James H. Price Jr.
Librarian

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