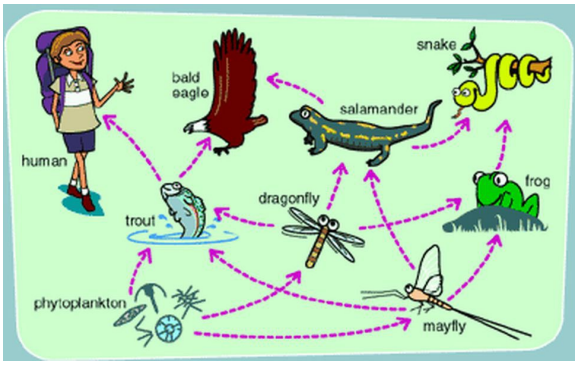
How Acid Rain Affects a Food Web

by The Environmental Protection Agency

This text is taken from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's website.

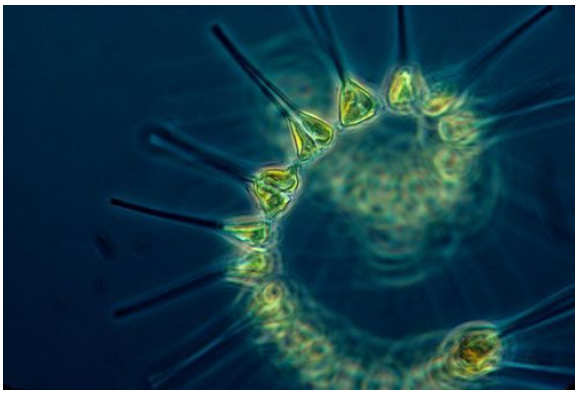
A food web is a diagram that explains the feeding relationships between different plants and animals in an ecosystem. An animal that is at the top of a food web eats the various plants and animals that are listed below it. Therefore, the animals at the top are predators, and the animals and plants listed below them are prey. Some animals have many different sources of food, while others are more limited in what they eat.



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

an example of a food web

Acid rain can cause serious problems for many different animals and plants. As a result, the entire food web is affected. For example, acid rain can cause phytoplankton in lakes to die. Insects, which rely on phytoplankton for food, now have less food to eat, and they begin to die as a result. These insects are a source of food for many other animals, such as fish, birds, frogs, and salamanders. As the insects die, there is now less food for these animals. This process continues up the entire food web. So, although acid rain may not directly affect a certain species of plant or animal, it can affect the entire food web by limiting the amount of food available.



phytoplankton