Food Web Questions

1. How is a food chain different from a food web? Give an estimate of how many food chains are found in your food web.

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2. What is one species that could be removed from your food web that wouldn’t cause the entire web to fall apart?

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3. What is one ‘Keystone Species’ in your food web-a species that the entire web depends on? Why is that species a ‘key’ to your environment?

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4. Look at your web and remove one species (mentally – not actually erasing). Describe what happens to all of the species’ populations because of this species being removed.

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5. Now go one step further. Using the information from the last question-all of those species’ populations changing, indicate what would happen next to all of the species. For example, if a rabbit population increase I the last question, some predator’s population would probably go up now because of that increase in food.

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6. Now that you can see how a seemingly insignificant species can have a major impact on the overall health of a food web, consider the following: Some species cause major problems to humans. For example, the mosquito that carries malaria kills millions of people on the African Continent and West Nile virus increasingly in the US .When is it okay for humans to attempt to remove a species from a food web?

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7. If humans did nothing to harm a food web, but we noticed that something was wrong with that food web, do you think we should try to fix the problem or let nature run its course? Justify your answer by explaining why you feel that way.

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8. The Endangered Species Act was put in place to try to keep from letting any species go extinct. However, if you believe the fossil record, species were going extinct before humans ever got here. Should humans attempt to save endangered species from going extinct, or let them go? Justify your answer by explaining why you feel that way.

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**Desert Ecosystem (this is a partial list – add any organism you feel fits to your own food web)**

Lizard eats insects and spiders

Horny lizard(toad) eats small insects

Ground squirrel eats green plants, seeds, bulbs, and acorns

Rabbit eats plants of any kind

Pocket mouse small rodent that eats seeds and berries

Gopher snake eats rats, mice, rodents, rabbits, birds, quail and lizards

Rattlesnake eats rats, mice, rodents, rabbits, birds, quail and lizards

Coyote scavenger, eats squirrels, mice, rabbits, grasshoppers, birds, berries

Skunk eats insects, small rodents, birds, eggs, and plants

Scrub jay eats insects, eggs, smaller birds, and acorns (a Corvid species which means it is a scavenger and steals human food)

Quail medium size bird that eats seeds, leaves, berries, and insects

Red-tailed hawk large bird that eats rodents, squirrels, rabbits, and insects

Grasshopper insect that eats green plants

Spider eats insects

Indian tea green plant with twig like leaves

Rubber rabbitbrush green plants with yellow flowers

Tall sagebrush green plant with small yellowish-green flowers

Cheat grass earth growing plant, dries quickly in summer

Bunch grasses varies varieties of green grasses

Desert peach thorny green plant with berries in late summer

Bacteria decomposer found in the soil

 There are many other species of organisms found in the desert ecosystem. Feel free to add species you are familiar with.