
Marine Food Chains

Level

4-5

Key questions

What is a predator?

What is prey?

Key outcome

Describe a food chain.

This activity can be done the other way round (and often is), but it is interesting to see if the original perceptions and understandings of marine science shown in the construction of the mobile can then be tested in the field.

Conventionally, we usually ask primary students to construct mobiles, but senior biology and environmental science students can find the physical activity of construction clarifies their thinking and provides variety to 'book learning'. Thus this activity can be done by Level 10 and above.

What you need

Pictures or outlines of marine animals, zoo plankton, algae/seaweed

String or fishing line

Pieces of wood

Glue or sticky tape

Optional: plastic sheets, felt/overhead projector pens

Scissors

What you do

(a) In the classroom

You can work in small groups. Make a mobile from the pictures (sheet on next page), using fishing line or dark cotton. Or, cut outlines of the various species, and cover them with dark paper or paint them the correct colours. Or, trace the outlines from a reference book and transfer these to plastic sheets or old plastic covers from folders or acetate sheets. These can then be coloured by using overhead projector pens or large felt pens. Include some invertebrates and algae and zooplankton. Make sure you put the top predator at the top! Suspend it from the ceiling.

(b) Prove the mobile is correct!

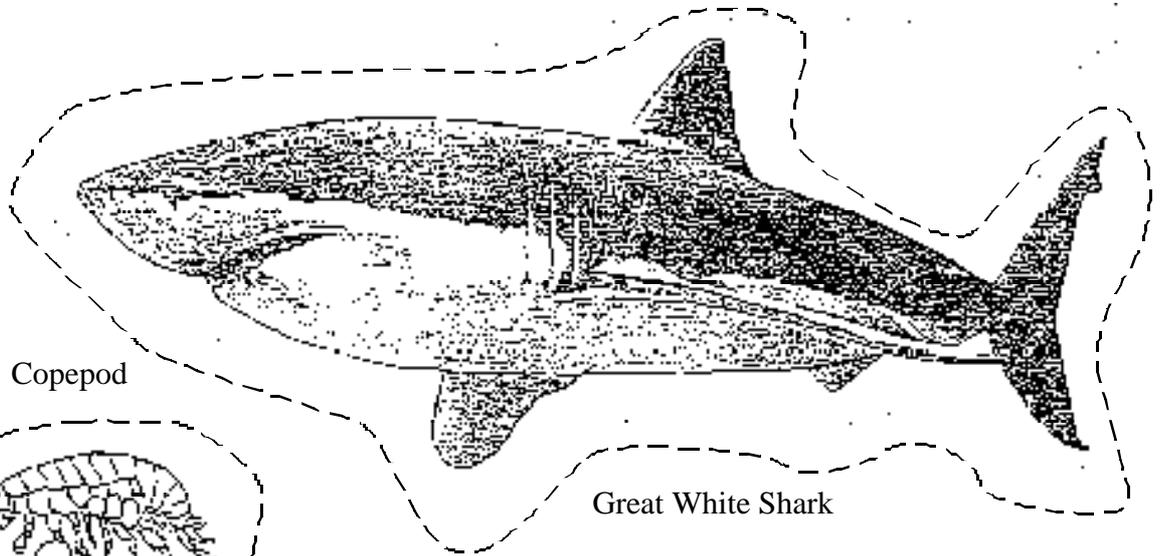
During a field study on the beach and rocky shore, you can check what eats what, especially if you see water washing over molluscs such as mussels or oysters or cunjevoi. Watch a crab scavenging. Watch a fisher: what bait is he/she using to catch which fish? What do the little fish in a rock pool eat? What are the birds eating?

If necessary, adjust the mobile back at school. Discuss what differences were found.

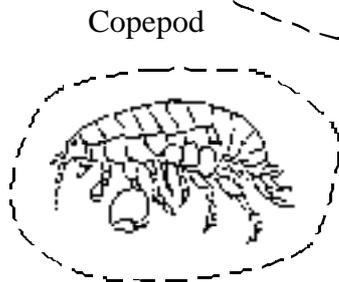
Adapted from Karen Wilson, Marine Discovery Centre, Woodbridge, Tasmania, and Moroney et al, *Coastal Activities for Primary Schools*.

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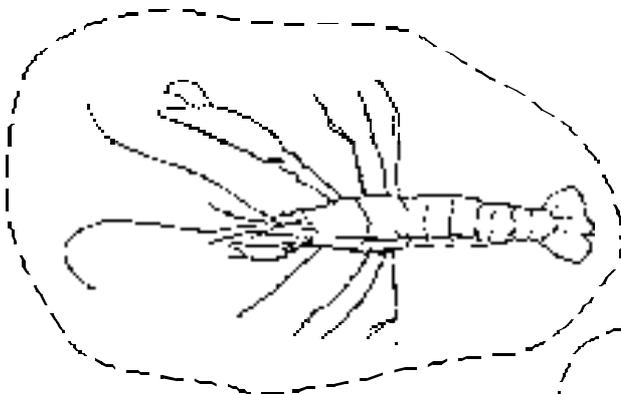
Make a mobile from the pictures below. Make sure you put the top predator on top!



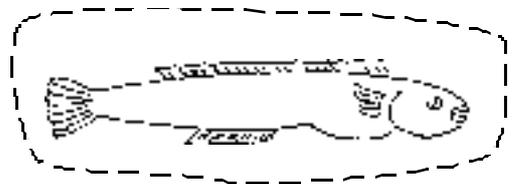
Great White Shark



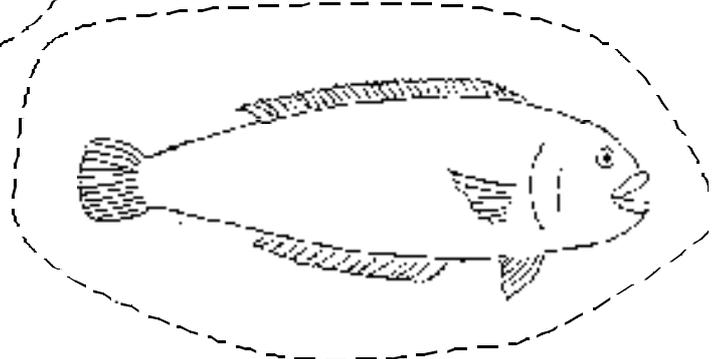
Copepod



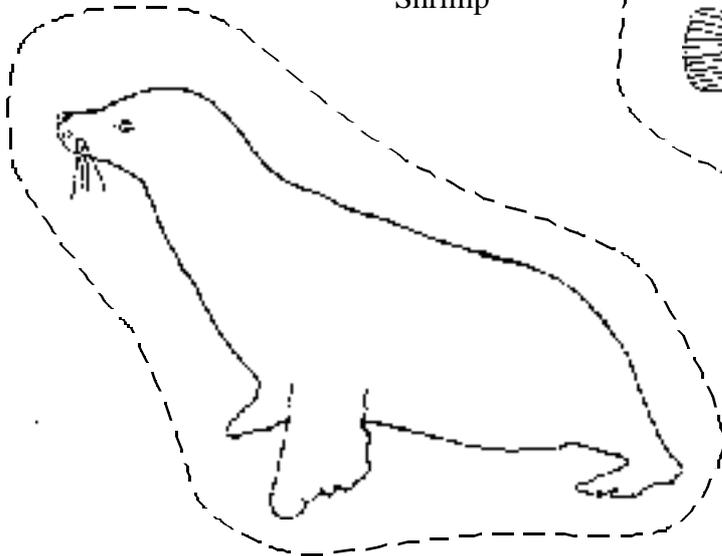
Shrimp



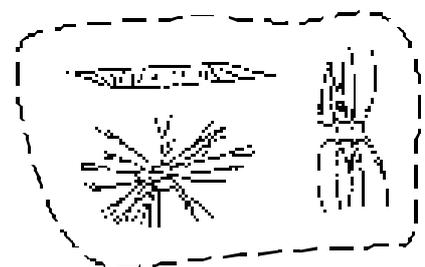
Fish



Fish



Fur Seal



Diatoms