



The **apex predators** in our Puget Sound food web are orcas and humans.

The Puget Sound Food Web



There are more than **100 species** around the Sound that rely on forage fish for much of their sustenance. These are the **tertiary consumers**.



Forage fish consume the smallest plants and animals in the marine environment! This makes them **secondary consumers**. There are few other species at this middle level of the food web.



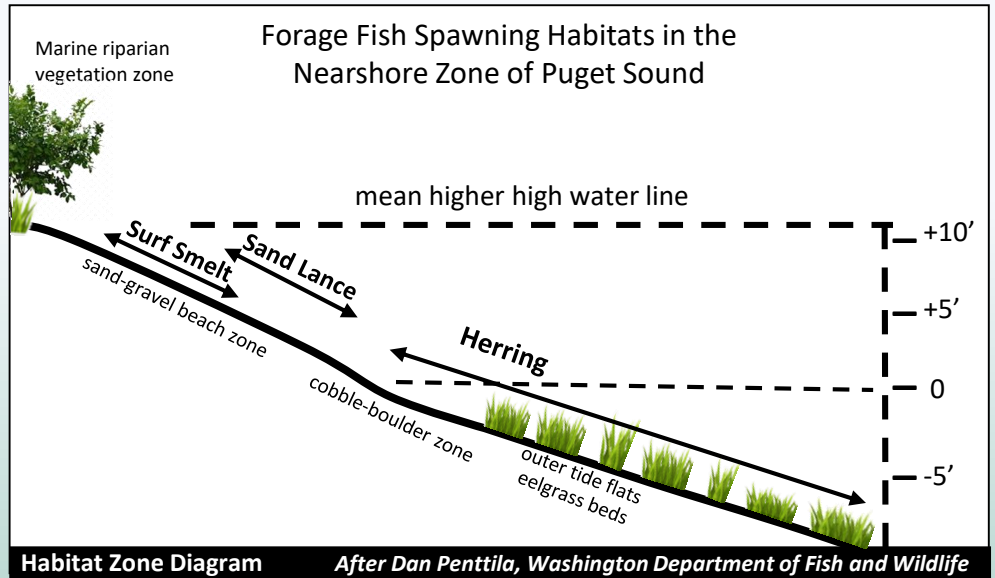
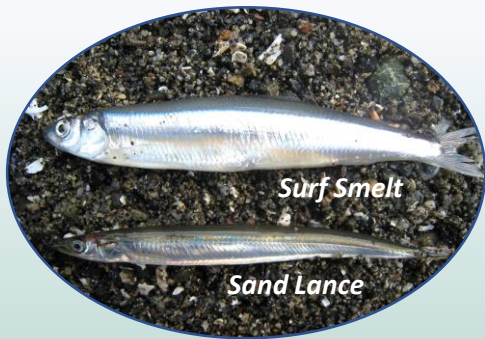
Zooplankton are tiny marine animals including larval clams, shrimp, crab, sea stars, and even fish. They eat phytoplankton and other zooplankton, making them **primary consumers**.



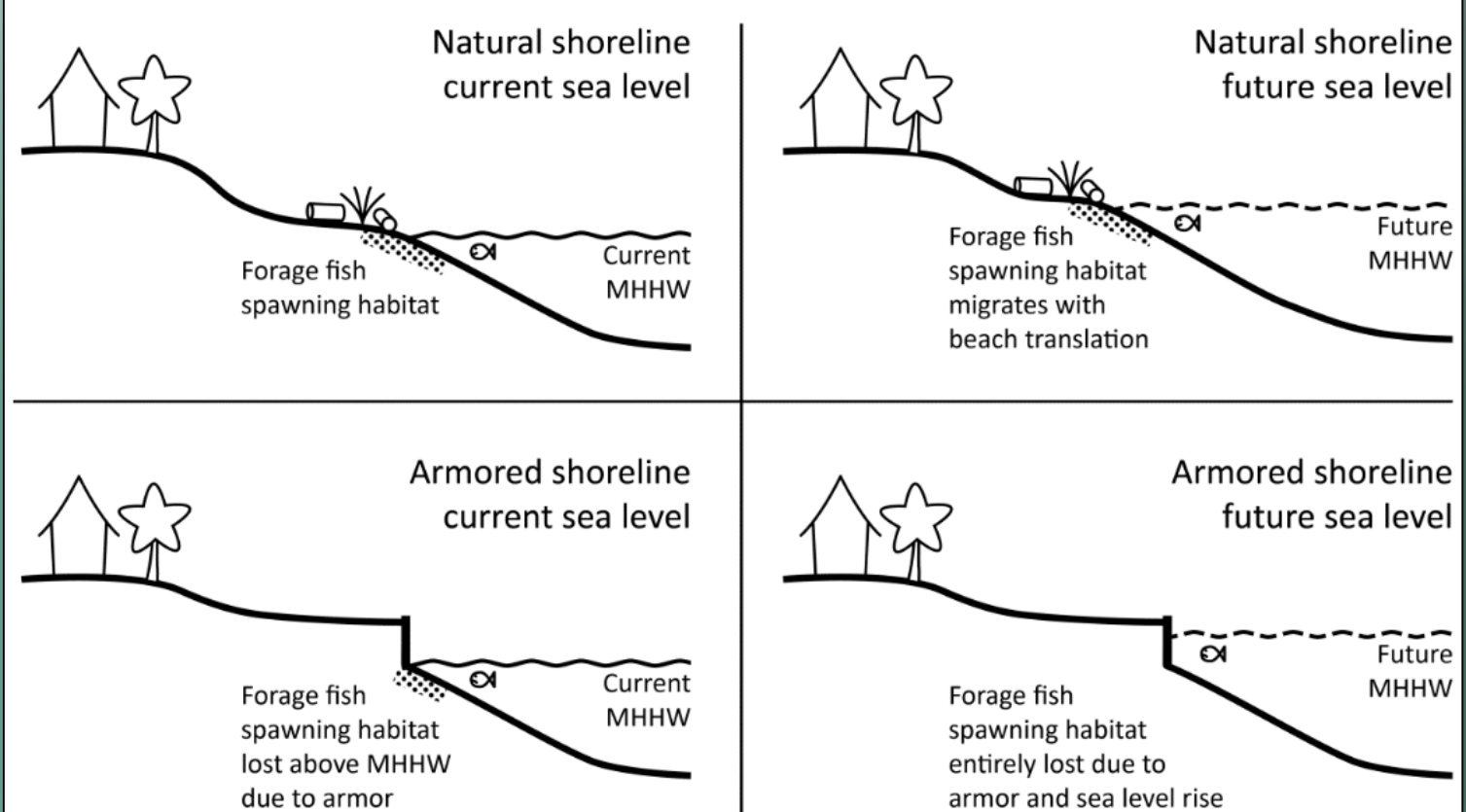
Phytoplankton are microscopic floating plants that derive their energy from the sun. They are **primary producers**, forming the base of marine food webs.



Forage fish including Herring, Surf Smelt, and Sand Lance all play a key role in the Puget Sound food web, capturing and transferring energy and essential nutrients from plankton to species higher in the web, like salmon! All require healthy nearshore habitat for spawning. Surf Smelt and Sand Lance are especially dependent on unarmored sand and gravel beaches.



The Coastal Squeeze



Sea Level Rise Diagram

Courtesy Jim Johannessen, Coastal Geologic Services, Inc