

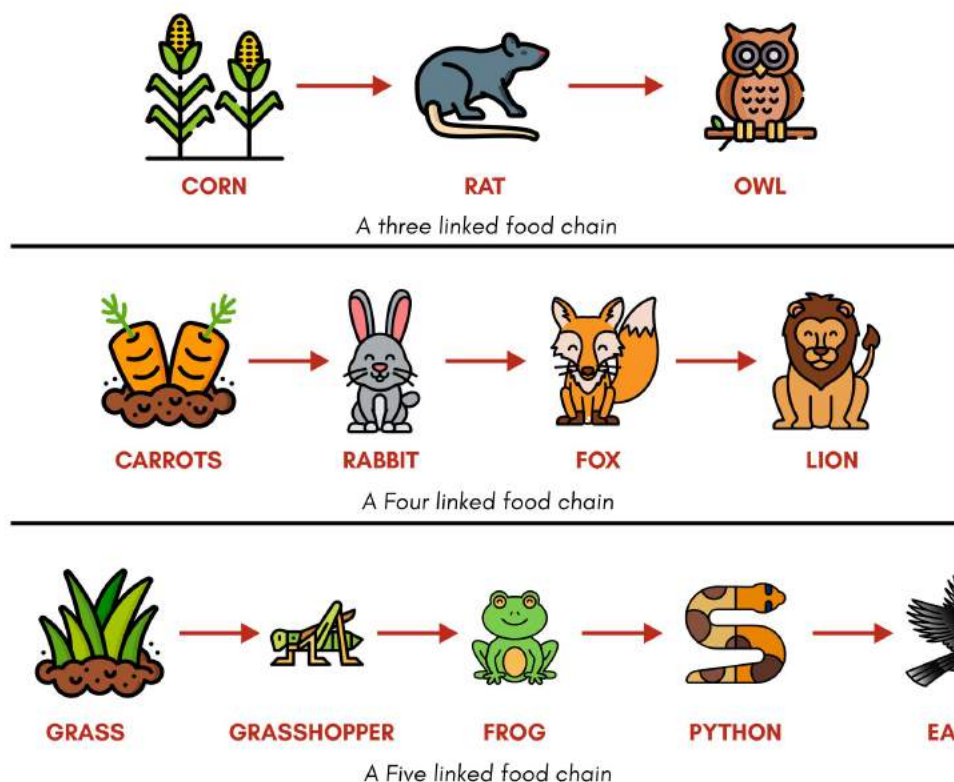
1.5. Food Chain

1.5.1. Definition

The order of living organisms in a community in which one organism consumes other and is itself consumed by another organism to transfer energy is called a food chain.

Food chain is also defined as “**a chain of organisms**, existing in any natural community, through which **energy is transferred**”.

Every living being irrespective of their size and habitat, from the tiniest algae to giant blue whales, need food to survive.



Food chain is structured differently for different species in different ecosystems. Each food chain is the vital pathway for energy and nutrients to follow through the ecosystem.

1.5.2. Types of Food Chain

There are two types of food chains:

- **Grazing food chain**, beginning with autotrophs. In this, energy and nutrients move from plants to the herbivores consuming them, and to the carnivores or omnivores preying upon the herbivores.
- **Detrital food chain**, beginning with dead organic matter. In a detrital food chain, dead organic matter of plants and animals is broken down by decomposers, e.g., bacteria and fungi, and moves to detritivores and then carnivores.

1.6. Food Web

The word ‘web’ means network. **Food web can be defined as ‘a network of interconnected food chains so as to form a number of feeding relationships amongst different organism of a biotic community.**