

## **Glossary for TEKS**

### ***Autotroph***

Organisms that use energy from the sun to manufacture their own food. Plants are autotrophs, as are many types of bacteria.

### ***Carnivore***

Organisms that “kill” and eat other animals or heterotrophs.

### ***Consumer***

Any organism which must consume other organisms (living or dead) to satisfy its energy needs.

### ***Decomposer***

Organisms which break down compounds of dead plants and animals.

### ***Detritus***

Accumulated organic debris from dead organisms, often an important source of nutrients in a food web.

### ***Ecosystem***

All the organisms in a particular region and the environment in which they live. The elements of an ecosystem interact with each other in some way, and so depend on each other either directly or indirectly.

### ***Food chain/food web***

All the interactions of predator and prey, included along with the exchange of nutrients into and out of the soil. These interactions connect the various members of an ecosystem, and describe how energy passes from one organism to another.

### ***Herbivore***

An organism that eats plants or other autotrophic organisms. The term is used primarily to describe animals

### ***Heterotrophs***

Organisms which depend upon autotrophs as their food or energy source. Animals are heterotrophs

### ***Omnivore***

An organism which eat both plants and animals.

### ***Primary consumer***

A primary consumer is an organism that eats plant material.

***Producer***

Any organism which brings energy into an ecosystem by producing its own food. Plants are producers

***Secondary consumer***

A secondary consumer is an organism that eats primary consumers.

***Tertiary consumer***

A tertiary consumer is an organism that feeds on secondary consumers in a food chain.