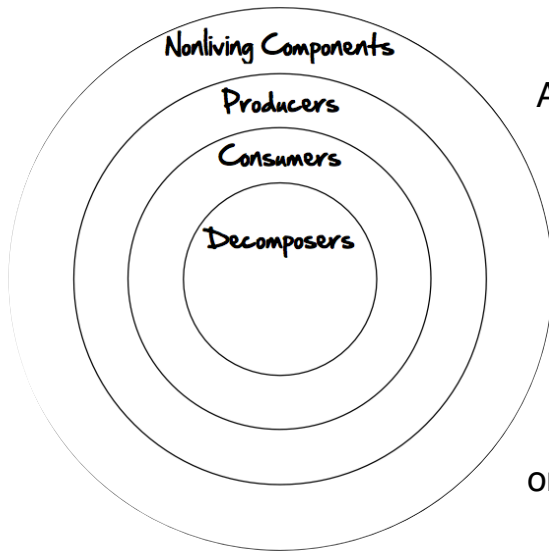


# Wetland Ecosystems & Food Chains



An **ecosystem** is a community of living and non-living components that work with each other create an environment. A wetland is an ecosystem because there are **living organisms interacting with the non-living environment**.

The living components of a wetland ecosystem include all plants (**producers**), animals (**consumers**), fungus and microscopic soil organisms (**decomposers**).

**Producers** are green plants that make their own food using sunlight, air and water. Producers create their own energy.

There are **two types of consumers**:

Primary Consumers	Secondary Consumers
-animals that only eat plants -aka herbivores ex: squirrel, horse, mouse	-animals that eat other animals (or plants) -aka carnivores/omnivores -Carnivores only eat meat ex: owl, hawk, wolf -Omnivores eat meat and plants ex: humans, box turtle, badger, birds

**\*\*Note:** Animals are called **consumers** because they cannot make their own food. They need to consume (eat) plants or animals to get energy.

**Decomposers** are organisms that reuse and recycle material that used to be living. They include organisms like fungi, bacteria, earthworms, millipedes, beetles, ants and maggots.

The **non-living components** of wetland ecosystems include water, rocks, sunlight, air, soil and chemicals.

All of these different components and factors combine to create an interconnected, dynamic and rich forest environment. Without one of them, the others could not exist.

