

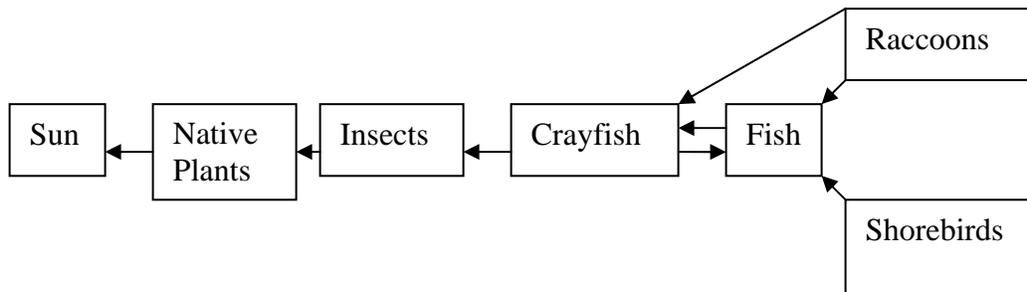
Activity 2- Web of Life with Invasive Impacts

Part a- Lead students through Activity #3 (p.16) steps 1-4 from Duck's Unlimited Teacher Guide to Wetland Activities, found at:

<http://www.greenwing.org/dueducator/ducanadapdf/teachersguide.pdf>.

Make sure to include native plants and crayfish in your food web. Crayfish are omnivorous, feeding on native aquatic plants, snails, insects and fish and amphibian eggs and young.

Sample wetland food web:



Part b- Now instead of step 5, let the group know that purple loosestrife outcompeted many of the native plants for food and resources, let all the kids that are aquatic plants know that they are now purple loosestrife. Have all the members of the web who eat native plants shake their string. Now have all the students who felt the shake, shake their string. **Remember, invasives like purple loosestrife are not the food of choice for most wetland omnivores.**

Discussion Questions:

- Who felt the string shake? *If you felt the string shake that means you're probably going to be impacted by the fact that purple loosestrife replaced the native plants.*
- Why would any of the rest of you that don't even eat plants care if purple loosestrife took over? *Because our web is all connected and what happens to one group impacts most of us. You may not eat plants, but something you eat might and if it has no food, it won't survive and then what'll you eat.*
- Was any member of our food web not impacted by the invasion of purple loosestrife? - *SUN, but it's not living*
- Which native species do you think feed on purple loosestrife? - *None, although some pollinators use it for nectar.*

Part c- Now return the native plants back to the web and remove the purple loosestrife. Let the group know that the rusty crayfish outcompeted the native crayfish for food, let all the kids that are native crayfish know that they are now rusty crayfish. Have the rusty crayfish students shake their string. Now have all the students who felt the shake, shake their string. **Rusties and other invasive crayfish are voracious eaters and are able to eat large amounts of the**

native aquatic vegetation and fish eggs in turn impacting the fish population and reducing habitat (aquatic plants) that fish and other native species use for shelter. Raccoons and fish will eat young rusties, however they soon become too large for them to eat.

Discussion Questions:

- Who felt the string shake? *If you felt the string shake that means you're probably going to be impacted by the fact that rusties replaced the native crayfish.*
- How do rusties impact both members of the food web lower and higher on the web? *They eat large amount of the plants that insects really on in addition to the insects themselves. They eat fish eggs reducing fish populations and also become too big for grown fish and other animals like raccoons to eat thus reducing their populations.*