**ECOLOGY**

**Lecture 3.**

**ENERGY**

The energy flow decrease at each step as listed by the heat loss occurring with each transfer of energy from one form to another .High rates of production, in both natural and cultured ecosystems, occur when physical factors are favorable.

**FOOD CHAINS:**

The transfer of food energy from the source in autotrophs (plants) through a series of organisms that consume and are consumed is called the FOOD CHAIN.

At each transfer , a proportion (often80 or 90%) of the potential energy is lost as heat. Therefore , the shorter the food chain or the nearer the organisms to the beginning of the chain the greater the energy available to that population.

**Food chains are of two basic types:**

1. **The grazing food chain**: which starting from a green plant base goes to grazing herbivores(i.e.,organisms eating plants cells or tissue) and on to carnivores (i.e.,animal eaters).
2. **The detritus food chain:** which goes from nonliving organic matter in to microorganisms and then to detritus-feeding organisms (detritivores) and their predators.





**Example for food chain in water:** we eat the big fish that ate the little fish that ate the zooplankton that ate the phytoplankton that fixed the sun s energy or we eat the cow that ate the grass that fixed the light energy.













**Trophic lev**el: is apposition in a food web and is determined by the numbers of transfers of energy from primary producers to that level. Primary producers occupy the first trophic level in eco systems since they use inorganic forms of energy principally light to convert CO2 n to biomass.

**HERBIVORES AND DETRITIVORES** are often called primary consumers and occupy the second trophic level .Carnivores feeding on herbivores and detritivores are called secondary consumers and occupy the third trophic level .Predators that feed on carnivores occupy a fourth trophic level .