

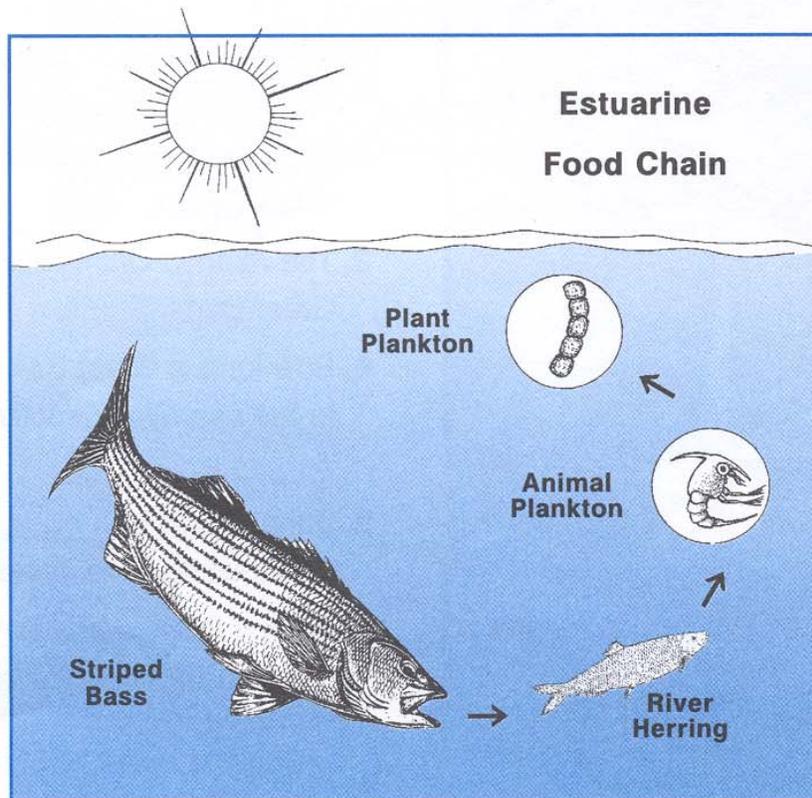
# “Between-Land”

## A Rich Soup

An estuary is a shallow, protected area where fresh water from rivers and salt water from the ocean mix. Its waters are a rich vegetable soup, made up of bits of decaying leaves, grasses, and tiny algae washed from rivers along with minerals and nutrients. The estuary is flooded twice a day by the rising tide, which brings with it nutrients from the sea. When the waters mix together, they fertilize the shallow bay where salt marsh grasses, eelgrass, seaweeds, and microscopic plants thrive.

All this food draws many animals, from microscopic crab larvae to fishes and birds, to graze on this abundance. When the plants of the estuary die, they are broken into

smaller particles by bacteria and become added seasonings in the estuary soup. Although this “detritus” from decaying plants won’t be found on a “human” menu, clams, oysters, fish and lobsters are eaten by many of us. About two-thirds of the seafood we eat has spent at least part of their lives in an estuary.



## Between-time

The estuary is not like other places. It is not quite land and not quite sea, but as the Indians called it, a “Between-Land.” Great Bay is also “between-time.” Its shoreline hasn’t changed greatly since the time

when Native Americans camped along its shores, but it’s beginning to show some of the signs of our times – water pollution and the loss of natural habitats.