

Brine Shrimp Observation (7 minutes- refer to background information for details about aquatic critters. Refuge staff will provide a bucket with a salt pond water sample and a viewing tub as well as cups and hand lenses.)

Materials: 12 dipping cups, 12 hand lenses, salt pond water sample in bucket, viewing tub, brine shrimp fact sheet, food pyramid poster, food chain cards

Do

Pass out cups and hand lenses. Pour some of the water from the bucket into the viewing tub. Instruct students to take a small water sample with their cup to investigate and observe with their hand lenses.

Ask

? **Do you see any brine shrimp in your sample? Can you describe them?** (Brine shrimp are crustaceans, like crabs and lobsters; they are usually pink or red, with many legs.)

? **Are you looking at a male or female brine shrimp? How do you know?** (A mature female has a dark colored egg sack near the tail. A male has claspers on his head.)

? **Describe the way brine shrimp move.** (Brine shrimp move their legs continuously in order to circulate the water which contains oxygen over their gills and to draw algae toward them.)

Discussion (3 minutes- Use Food Chain cards and refer to the Food Pyramid poster)

Do

Choose 3 students to become a salt pond food chain. Hand out the cards, one per student.

Read “These cards represent parts of a salt pond food chain. You will arrange yourselves as a food chain.”

Ask

? **What plant is at the beginning of the salt pond food chain?** (Algae.)

? **What eats the algae?** (brine shrimp.)

? **What eats the brine shrimp?** (Small fish; shorebirds, such as black-necked stilts, avocets and sandpipers; and ducks.)

? **Do we have a food chain?** (yes!)

? **What do salt ponds provide for migratory birds?** (They provide food: algae, brine shrimp, brine flies, and small fish and habitat during migration)

Do

Have students put their samples back into the bucket and hand in their equipment.