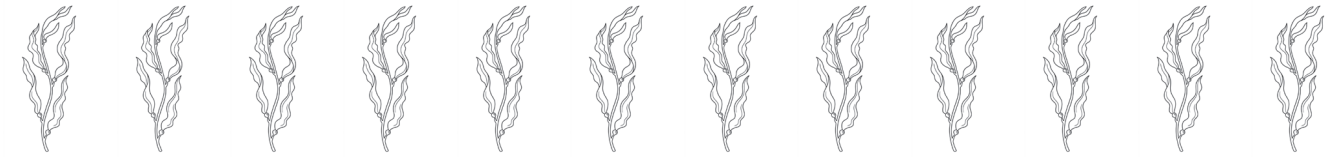
Lab Record

Scientist: _____ Date: _____

MY GUESS

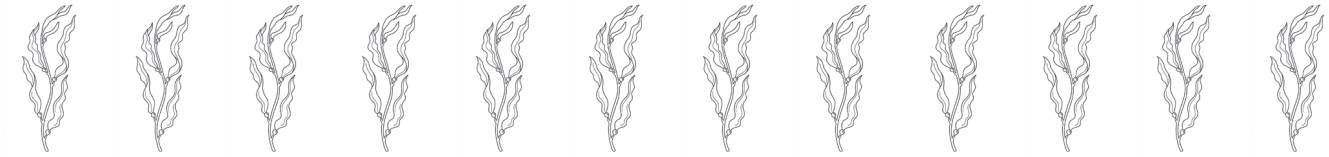
WHAT I SAW

Game 1: Otters are here



Rolls: | | Kelp still standing: _____

Game 2: The otters are gone



Rolls: | | Kelp still standing: _____

WHAT'S GOING ON?

This is a food web. Urchins eat kelp, and sea otters eat urchins. When otters are around, they keep urchin numbers down, so the kelp stays healthy. Take the otters away and the urchins eat and eat. One missing animal can change a whole forest.
Scientists call this a trophic cascade (TRO-fik kas-KADE).

OCEAN CONNECTION

Where sea otters have disappeared, purple urchins can chew a kelp forest down to bare rock. Scientists call that an urchin barren.

Did you know? In Elkhorn Slough, a marshy estuary on Monterey Bay, sea otters eat lots of crabs, and that helps the seagrass there stay healthy.

TRY THIS NEXT

Play both games again with 30 rolls. Does the difference get bigger?