The portions of the Earth's surface where water is in a solid form, usually as snow or ice. This includes sea ice, freshwater ice, snow, glaciers, and frozen ground (or permafrost). The word cryosphere comes from the Greek word "kryos," meaning frost or icy cold.
Figure 1. A coastal food web in Alaska based on primary production by phytoplankton, and ending in predators of both land and sea. (Image courtesy U.S. Geological Survey)