
Plankton Vocabulary

Algae-nonvascular plants possessing chlorophyll and performing photosynthesis

Autotroph-an organism that produces its own food

Baleen-horny material forming the fringed plates that hang from the upper jaw of certain whales

Benthic-lives and/or moves on the ocean floor

Carnivore-an organism that eats only meat

Cellulose-the main component of plant cell walls

Cilia-tiny, hairlike projections; used for locomotion in some one-celled organisms

Density-relationship of mass to volume

Diatom-microscopic, golden-brown algae having cell walls made of silica

Diatomaceous earth-deposits of diatom frustules or their fossil remains

Dinoflagellate-marine algae having two flagella

Ecosystem-a local biological community and its pattern of interaction with its environment

Flagella-whip like extensions of unicellular organisms used for locomotion

Frustule-the cell wall of a diatom

Herbivore-an organism that eats only plants

Heterotroph-an organism that does not produce its own food

Holoplankton-zooplankton that spend their whole life as plankton

Larva-animal stage just after hatching from an egg

Meroplankton-temporary plankton

Microscopic-too small to be seen with the unaided eye, but large enough to be studied under a microscope

Pelagic-pertaining to or living in the open ocean

Photosynthesis-the process of plants converting chlorophyll and sunlight into food

Phytoplankton-microscopic plants that float near the water surface; the base of almost all food webs in the ocean and in fresh water

Plankter-a single plankton

Plankton-organisms which can be animal or plant that drift or swim weakly, carried about in water currents

Zooplankton-animal plankton ranging from microscopic in size to the largest jellyfish