Plankton Encyclopedia Article

Plankton

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Organisms that live in the water column, drifting with the currents. Bacteria, **fungi**, algae, protozoans, invertebrates, and some vertebrates are represented, some organisms spending only parts of their lives (e.g. larval stages) as members of the plankton. Plankton is a relative term since many planktonic organisms possess some means by which they may control their horizontal and/or vertical positions. For example, organisms may possess paddle-like flagella for propulsion over short distances, or they may regulate their vertical distributions in the water column by producing oil droplets or gas bubbles. Plankton comprise a major item in aquatic food chain/webs.

See Also

Phytoplankton; Zooplankton