

# Plankton Vocabulary

## **diatoms**

a group of phytoplankton that are green and have a shell of silicon. They make the water green in color.

## **dinoflagellates**

a group of phytoplankton that are reddish-brown and have armored plates of cellulose. They can act like both animals and plants, and can move through the water. Most are bioluminescent and toxic.

## **larva**

a developmental stage of an animal (after hatching from an egg) that appears different than the adult.

## **holoplankton**

permanent plankton; any plankton that spends its whole life drifting or floating with the currents.

## **macroplankton**

large plankton; plankton from 2 cm to 20 cm.

## **megaplankton**

huge plankton; jellyfish, salps and others with sizes greater than 20 cm.

## **meroplankton**

temporary plankton; zooplankton in the egg or larva stage, that will live on the sea floor or become a powerful swimmer as an adult.

## **microplankton**

plankton from .020 mm to 0.2 mm (20 μm to 200 μm) in size.

## **nannoplankton**

plankton from .002 mm to .020 mm (or 2 μm to 20 μm) in size.

## **photosynthesis**

the process of plants converting water and carbon dioxide into food using sunlight as energy.

## **phytoplankton**

microscopic photosynthetic organisms that drift in the surface waters of the ocean. The beginning of most food chains in the ocean.

## **plankton**

living organisms that cannot swim strongly and are carried around inside the ocean currents.

## **red tide**

a patch of the ocean surface which has turned reddish-brown by a bloom or population explosion of dinoflagellates.

## **zooplankton**

animals that drift in the ocean currents; different types are found at all depths from the surface down to the deepest depths.