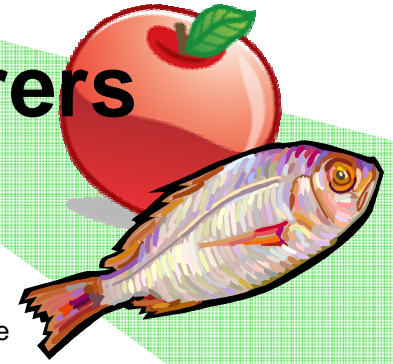


Wonderful Wanderers

Adapted from ESNERP Educator's Manual



Plankton are aquatic or marine plants and animals that drift. They cannot consistently swim against a current. Of infinite form, function, and design, they come in all sizes from large jellyfish to microscopic diatoms. They are found in salt and fresh water. Most plankton are tiny and microscopic; however, they are so abundant that they are the primary source of food for life in the ocean and estuaries.

Plant plankton are known as phytoplankton. Like terrestrial plants, they have pigment with which to capture sunlight as an energy source. That allows them to create carbohydrates from carbon dioxide, water, and salts in the process of photosynthesis. Phytoplankton are primary producers, supplying food energy for other ocean life. The phytoplankton are preyed upon by zooplankton (animal plankton) and filter feeders of the estuary, such as bent-nosed clams, fat innkeeper worms and top smelt.

PURPOSE: To observe and identify living plankton.

MATERIALS:

Plankton ID Sheet plankton sample

PROCEDURE:

1. Get a sample of plankton collected earlier from estuary.
2. With a partner, examine the sample under the microscope and find one plankton species to draw. Put your drawing in the data section.
3. Use the Plankton ID sheet to identify the species you have drawn. Mark it on the Data table and describe what you saw it doing.
4. Continue to identify the different plankton species in your sample. Mark each one you identify on the Data sheet and describe its activity.

DATA:

Phylum	
Genus	
Common Name	

LS – Activity #50

DATA: (cont.)

SPECIES	IDENTIFIED	OBSERVATION
Diatom		
Snail egg case		
Noctiluca		
Leptomedusa		
Pedi-velger		
Trochophore		
Nematode		
Cyphonsutes larva		
Radiolaria		
Veliger of snail		
Ostracod		
Polychaete		
Spinoid		
Fish egg		
Copepod		
Nauplius		
Orchestoidea		
Young fish		
Zoea of Porcellana		
Caprellidaea		
Rotifer		

PLANKTON ID SHEET

