

Extra Information on Ocean Life

This document summarizes the groups of ocean life used in the educational game [Ocean Protector](#). All the ocean life featured in the game are real-life groups that live in the oceans around the southeastern United States. Each page also provides hyperlinks to the NOAA website for more information on each group. It is also important to note that there are thousands of types of plants and animals throughout our oceans, far too many to all show in this game!

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Plankton

Plankton are very small organisms that float around the ocean. They are the foundation of ocean food webs.

There are two main groups of plankton, phytoplankton, and zooplankton.

- Phytoplankton are producers that use sunlight to get energy.
- Zooplankton are consumers that eat other plankton to get energy.

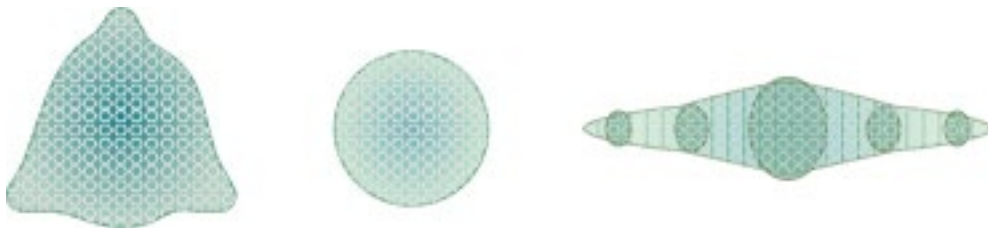
[For additional information on plankton click on this link to the NOAA website.](#)

Examples of plankton shown in this ocean scene include micro-algae, diatoms, and dinoflagellates.

Micro-algae



Diatoms



Dinoflagellates



Coral

Corals are a diverse group of very small animals that live in colonies that construct large hard structures that come in many shapes and sizes. Over time, groups of these structures build up into large coral reefs that provide a home to many different animal groups. Overall, coral reefs support the highest diversity of life on the planet.

Examples of coral shown in this ocean scene include Elkhorn, Pillar, and Lobe Starred coral. Each example also provides a NOAA link to more information.

Elkhorn Coral



Pillar Coral



Lobed Star Coral

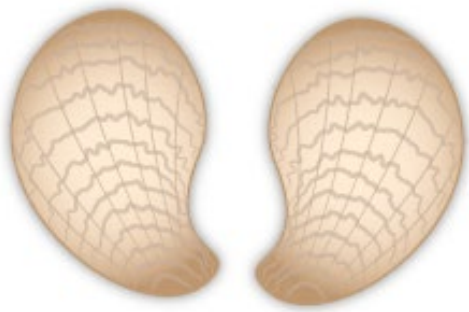


Mollusks

Mollusks include oysters, snails, sea slugs, and even squid and octopi. Almost all mollusks have some kind of shell material somewhere around or in their body. Mollusks help cycle nutrients and are food for many animals, including humans.

Examples of mollusks shown in this ocean scene include the Eastern Oyster and Queen Conch. Each example also provides a NOAA link to more information.

Eastern Oyster



Queen Conch

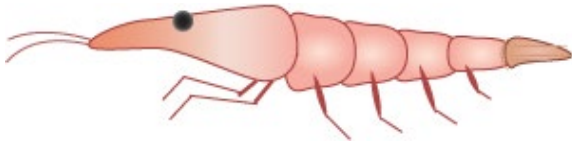


Crustaceans

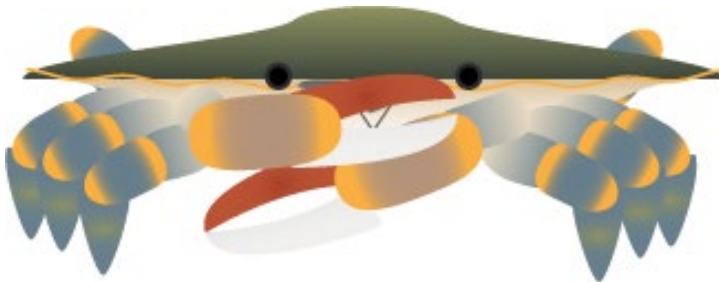
Crustaceans include crabs, lobsters, crayfish, shrimp, and krill. Almost all crustaceans have some form of external skeleton. Crustaceans are food for many animals, including humans, and help cycle nutrients.

Examples of crustaceans shown in this ocean scene include Pink Shrimp and Blue Crab. Each example also provides a NOAA link to more information.

Pink Shrimp



Blue Crab

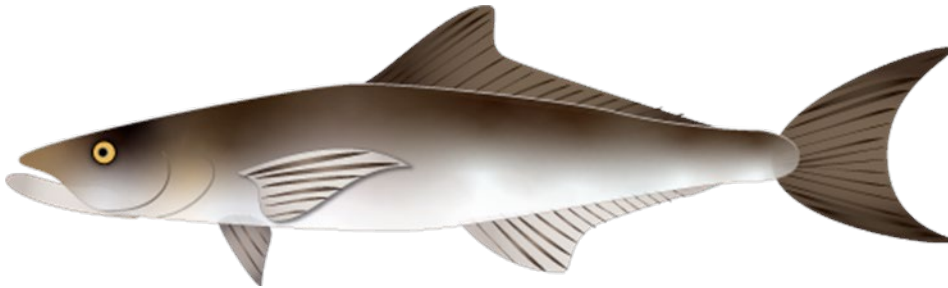


Fish

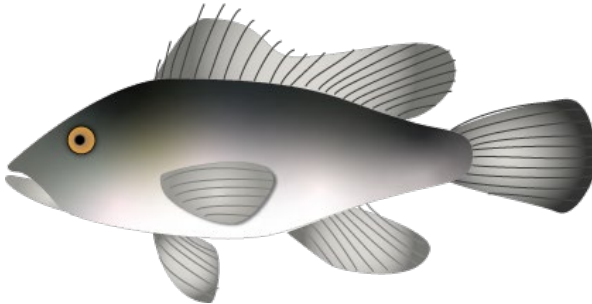
Fish are a diverse group that range in many shapes and sizes. All fish have some form of internal skeleton. Fish are important food for many different animals, including other fish and humans.

Examples of fish shown in this ocean scene include Cobia, Black Sea Bass, and Flounder. Each example also provides a NOAA link to more information.

Cobia



Black Sea Bass



Flounder

