

# Atlas of marine invertebrate larvae

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**Why and how marine invertebrate larvae metamorphose so fast?** The adaptive mechanisms include: (1) development of juvenile structures in larvae before they are metamorphically competent; (2) external cues trigger metamorphosis; and (3) rapid cell-to-cell conductance of the metamorphic signal to bring about rapid loss of larval structures and release of juvenile structures.

**What is the evolutionary significance of invertebrate larvae?** Answer: By living in a distinct environment, larvae may be given shelter from predators and reduce competition for resources with the adult population. Animals in the larval stage will consume food to fuel their transition into the adult form.

**How long do some invertebrate larvae stay in the plankton?** Planktotrophic larvae feed on plankton (mainly phytoplankton) during their pelagic life and spend anywhere from a few hours to a year as part of the plankton.

**What are the key evolutionary trends among invertebrate phyla?** In addition to developing symmetry as the invertebrates evolved, they also developed specialization, which is the ability for cells, tissues, or organs to be developed to adapt the animal to its environment; and cephalization, the ability for sensory organs to become concentrated at the front or top of an animal, ...

**What is the most successful invertebrate phylum in terms of diversity and abundance?** Arthropods are considered the most successful animals on Earth. The phylum includes more species and more individuals than all other groups of animals combined. Over 85 percent of all known animal species are arthropods (Fig.

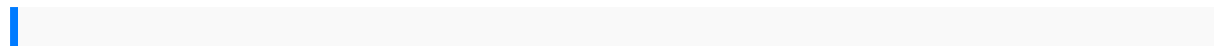
**What are two advantages to having planktonic larval stages?** The presumed advantages of such larvae include the avoidance of competition for resources with

adults, temporary reduction of benthic mortality while in the plankton, decreased likelihood of inbreeding in the next generation, and increased ability to withstand local extinction.

**Are copepods planktonic their whole life?** The planktonic marine copepods are a type of zooplankton called a holoplankton, which means that they stay planktonic for their entire life. It is also believed that about half of the species of copepods are parasitic, and use bony fish, sharks, marine mammals, and invertebrates as a host.

**How long do marine invertebrates live for?** The oceans are home to many of the earth's longest lived animals with several species of non-colonial marine invertebrates documented to live for more than 100 years. Many of these animals grow and reproduce throughout their lifespans and there is no apparent functional decline or increase in mortality rate with age.

**What do planktonic invertebrates eat?** Zooplankton and other small marine creatures eat phytoplankton and then become food for fish, crustaceans, and other larger species. Phytoplankton make their energy through photosynthesis, the process of using chlorophyll and sunlight to create energy.



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