



Filter-Feeding in Marine Invertebrates

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Message from the Guest Editor

Considering the dominant role of the phytoplankton in primary production in the sea, it is understandable that filter-feeding is widespread and filter feeders (or suspension feeders) are found in almost all animal classes represented in the sea. Filter-feeding animals are necessary links between suspended food particles (phytoplankton, free-living bacteria, and other members of the microbial loop) and higher trophic levels in marine food webs. In addition to many holo- and mero-planktonic organisms, such as copepods and invertebrate larvae that graze on the phytoplankton and other food particles in the water column, many filter-feeding animals such as bivalves, polychaetes, ascidians, bryozoans, and sponges graze on the phytoplankton in the near-bottom water. Particularly in shallow coastal waters and fjords, dense populations of filter-feeders may exert a pronounced grazing impact, which may keep the water clear (but not clean) in eutrophicated areas. On the other hand, the dense populations of filter-feeding jellyfish in such areas may exert a pronounced predation impact on grazing zooplankton, resulting in a phytoplankton boom and making the water green.





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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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