

# Nekton, Benthos, and Plankton - Tutorial Script

Marine organisms can be classified by many characteristics including how they feed, where they live, and their genetic traits. We'll begin by reviewing how marine organisms are classified by location - either as plankton, nekton, or benthos. **Nekton** are organisms that spend most of their time in the water column and can swim freely and faster than currents. Examples include whales, most fish, and squid. **Plankton** are organisms that live in the water column, but that either cannot swim or cannot swim faster than currents. Examples include microscopic foraminifera, coccolithophores, radiolarian, diatoms, dinoflagellates, and the larvae of many marine animals, such as crabs, fish, and sea stars - as well as larger organisms like floating sargassum weed and jellyfish. **Benthos** are organisms that live on or in the seafloor sediment. These organisms can be attached or freely moving, but must be unable to swim. Examples include anemones, clams, sea stars, crabs, and most seaweeds, which attach to rocks by holdfasts. What about organisms that live mostly on the bottom, but that can also swim? Like octopus, sawfish, rays, and flatfish? We call these organisms **nekto-benthos**.

Pause now. [music]

For more information and more detail, continue on to the next video in this series.

[end credits]

## **Nekton, Benthos, and Plankton Video Series:**

Part 1: Nekton, Benthos, and Plankton

Part 2: Feeding Methods

Part 3: Kingdoms, Phyla, and More

## **Kingdoms, Phyla, and More**

Produced by Katryn Wiese

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