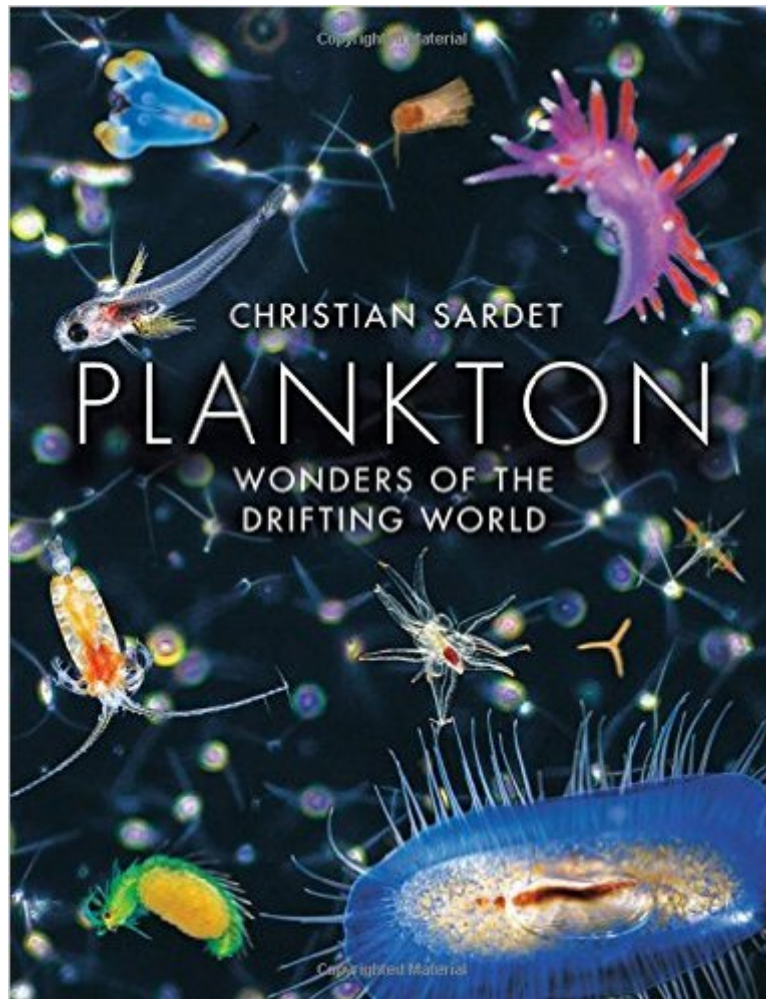


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# Plankton: Wonders Of The Drifting World



## Synopsis

Ask anyone to picture a bird or a fish and a series of clear images will immediately come to mind. Ask the same person to picture plankton and most would have a hard time conjuring anything beyond a vague squiggle or a greyish fleck. This book will change that forever. Viewing these creatures up close for the first time can be a thrilling experience—a "an elaborate but hidden world truly opens up before your eyes. Through hundreds of close-up photographs, Plankton transports readers into the currents, where jeweled chains hang next to phosphorescent chandeliers, spidery claws jut out from sinuous bodies, and gelatinous barrels protect microscopic hearts. The creatures' vibrant colors pop against the black pages, allowing readers to examine every eye and follow every tentacle. Jellyfish, tadpoles, and bacteria all find a place in the book, representing the broad scope of organisms dependent on drifting currents. Christian Sardet's enlightening text explains the biological underpinnings of each species while connecting them to the larger living world. He begins with plankton's origins and history, then dives into each group, covering ctenophores and cnidarians, crustaceans and mollusks, and worms and tadpoles. He also demonstrates the indisputable impact of plankton in our lives. Plankton drift through our world mostly unseen, yet they are diverse organisms that form ninety-five percent of ocean life. Biologically, they are the foundation of the aquatic food web and consume as much carbon dioxide as land-based plants. Culturally, they have driven new industries and captured artists' imaginations. While scientists and entrepreneurs are just starting to tap the potential of this undersea forest, for most people these pages will represent uncharted waters. Plankton is a spectacular journey that will leave readers seeing the ocean in ways they never imagined.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although this is the work of a researcher, you do not need to be a specialist to enjoy the unknown world of plankton life. In fact, beside the scientific names, you will find a clear classification of different types of phyto or zooplankton as well as details on how they mate, breed and die, drift along with the currents -- or how some of them can use their own power of decision to take a sudden turn and save their lives, or fight back. Not to mention an artistic touch that adds to the pleasure of delving into such attractive pictures: those creatures, equipped with flimsy coloured fins or translucent spiralling tentacles successfully stand out against the black backdrop of the pages. Most pictures as seen from under a microscope. Lastly, the author also teaches us about the place plankton life occupies in our present world. A rich and beautiful book I highly recommend.

Ever since humans first took to the sea we have been intrigued and mystified by the countless creatures that often appeared from depths below. Among the most enigmatic and mysterious were the glowing lights that often danced in the waves and followed our boats, yet eluded our groping hands. Were these angry Gods that we needed to appease, or gentle spirits that filled our nets and guided us home at night? No one knew. The true identity of these dancing sprites had to await the invention of a new technology: the microscope. In the 1850s German Zoologist Victor Hensen coined the term plankton and a new science was launched. Now, In his breathtaking coffee table book "Plankton: Wonders of the Drifting World" French Biologist/author Christian Sardet gives us a stunning testament to the endless variety in Nature and to the power and creativity of Natural Selection. Just flipping through this over sized volume is a delight, filled to overflowing with highly detailed micro-photos, the casual reader is introduced to a wondrous realm of fantastic creatures that seem alien to our wondering eyes. Using a wide range of imaging technology coupled with top of line cameras and lenses the contributors provide a sweeping survey of planktonic life. Plankton, it turns out, are a collection of drifting organisms from microscopic bacteria, archaea, phytoplankton to various multicellular life forms along with the embryos and larvae of much larger creatures. All these organisms live together in ecological harmony and provide the Bases for the Food Chain. Sardet delves into the biology, evolution and life styles of these exotic living things. Although this is not a Biology text-book it does go into some detail when explaining these complex life styles. Be prepared for Latinized Scientific Names, anatomical nomenclature and ecological complexities. The text is

more in the order of essays and picture captions that you can read or not, depending on how deep you want to get into the subject. For the Biology geeks, like me, the text and accompanying Bibliography are a ticket to additional reading sources. For a lot of readers it's the pictures that are the main attraction and this book doesn't skimp on that front. In addition to digital cameras and lenses some of the images are from more obscure sources; the Scanning Electron Microscope provided several shots, Confocal Microcopy is also represented with the stunner on page 146. The Extreme close-ups are over the top, showing internal organs like eyes, gills and pigment cells. Biological art is also on display with a History of Life Chart and several different Trees of Life including Darwin's famous "I think" sketch. Archival Art by the 19th century scientific illustrator Ernst Haeckel provides a look back at planktonic research. There were also some candid shots that caught my eye; the ocean sunfish "Mola mola" feeding on a "Velella" Hydrozoa, a baleen whale feeding on a plankton bloom and, the icing on the cake, a scenic shot of the Stromatolites in Shark Bay, Australia providing a look back into Deep Time. This is another picture book that needs to be experienced in the large format print edition for the full effect of these stunning images. I highly recommend it to anyone turned on by the Natural World and by nature photography in general. Last Ranger

The images in this book are amazing. I am at a loss to describe them. Some remind me of photos of distant galaxies and others of paintings by the abstract expressionists. Their quality is superb. This is a large coffee-table sort of book, worth browsing in. There is some technical detail, not too difficult for the educated reader. The upshot of reading the book is a better appreciation of the tremendous diversity and huge biomass--literally trillions of creatures producing a big portion of the oxygen we breathe. Even tiny and ostensibly simple creatures display amazing diversity and complexity of structure. That said, I found this book not so easy to read. The print is borderline tiny, not easy on older eyes like mine. Section intro pages are colored and the print may be black on a color or white on a color; the design is excellent but physical readability suffers. I'm not sure what else to say about this book. Some aspects of it are superb. The text is overall well-written but heavy on description rather than life processes, if that makes sense to you. I wish the book had more about the possible effects of global warming and other changes that would change the ocean in huge ways that could gravely affect these creatures. Maybe it was there and I missed it.

An outstanding example of Graphic Design and clear presentation, black backgrounds are ideal for plankton. Some of the best microscopy images I have seen, whilst not an academic or research

read it is the best introduction to oceanic plankton so far. I recommend it to schools and all those who love or live by the sea.

Breathtaking! The images are astounding, bringing to life creatures I bet you've never even dreamed of before. The text manages to hit the mark between scientific rigor and accessibility to the lay reader. This is a book that belongs in the classroom and on your coffee table. Enjoy!

I cannot believe how beautiful the pictures in this book are. Two things I would like added to this book:- A bit of information about the species, if they are salt-water only, more on life cycle and at least an evolutionary tree listing the species mentioned in the book.- A better glossary. For example about 5 species mentioned bioluminesce in their info, but not mentioned in the glossary under bioluminesce. Even after asking for thing or two, I still have to rate it as 5 stars as it is a wonderful read.

Beautiful photography and fascinating reading. I highly recommend this as a gift for people who like coffee-table books. I was completely mesmerized while reading it and studying the pictures. Wish I could bring myself to tear a few of the photos out and frame them! A very worthwhile book and a very important subject for people to know about.

Amazing photos of some of the most undiscovered beings on our planet -- life beneath the waves revealed from all over the world's oceans.

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