



Ocean Warming May Lead to an Increase in Sea Life

Warmer oceans could mean dramatic changes in underwater food webs and in the amount of marine life, according to a new study. Until now, little has been known about how changes in temperatures might affect the growth of all marine animals and plants.

The study looked at a simple underwater food chain and how temperature changes affect growth. In warmer waters, growth happens faster – so the need for food and energy increases. Researchers placed tiny zooplankton and phytoplankton in small containers and grew them at

different temperatures. The results show that higher temperatures could lead to more animals in the ocean, such as zooplankton or fish, but a reduction in the overall mass of living creatures in the sea.

The lead scientist said that this impacts how marine ecosystems might change with global warming: “Small changes in ocean temperature, like those expected with climate change or even just a warmer summer, have different effects on the food supply,” she said.

Ocean temperature averages about 30°C in the tropics and 2°C at the poles, and varies between summer and winter. Climate models predict ocean temperatures will rise between 2°C and 7°C in different parts of the world in the next 100 years. These changes would dramatically change the food chains of the ocean, said a researcher.



ST

