Salpa

For further details link

Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Thaliacea

Order: Salpida

Family: Salpidae

Genus: Salpa

Habit and habitat

Planktonic Life: Salps are holoplanktonic, meaning they live and drift in the open ocean without strong swimming ability.

Complex Life Cycle: They have a two-part life cycle, alternating between a solitary (oozoid) form and a colonial (aggregate) form.

Environment: They live in offshore marine environments.

Depth: While they may occur in dense swarms, they can also be found in solitary forms, and can exist at depths of 0 to 800 meters.

Characteristics

- Salps or salpa (also known colloquially as 'sea grape') are small, barrel-shaped marine invertebrates that belong to the family Salpidae within the order Salpida. Although they resemble jellyfish, salps are actually tunicates and thus are taxonomically closer to vertebrates**.**
- They are typically between 0.4 and 3.9 in (1 and 10 cm) long and possess bands of contracting muscles that form rings throughout their bodies.
- Salps are most commonly found in warm seas, particularly in the Southern Ocean, either singly or in elongated bead-like colonies.
- Salps move through the water using a method called jet propulsion. In this process, they contract the muscular bands around their bodies, drawing water in through the oral siphon.
- Their semi-transparent bodies are equipped with a highly efficient jet propulsion system, allowing them to move by contracting muscle bands that ring their transparent bodies.
- As they propel themselves through the water, they filter feed on microscopic plankton, straining their food through internal filters.
- Salps create a feeding net made of mucus that hangs inside their bodies. As they swim, they pump seawater in through their oral siphon and expel it through the atrial siphon.
- They are known for their complex life cycle, which alternates between sexual and asexual phases. Salps have a complex life cycle characterized by an obligatory alternation of generations, switching between a solitary asexual phase and a colonial sexual phase.
- They primarily feed on phytoplankton, but they are non-selective feeders and will consume almost anything that gets caught in their feeding trap.