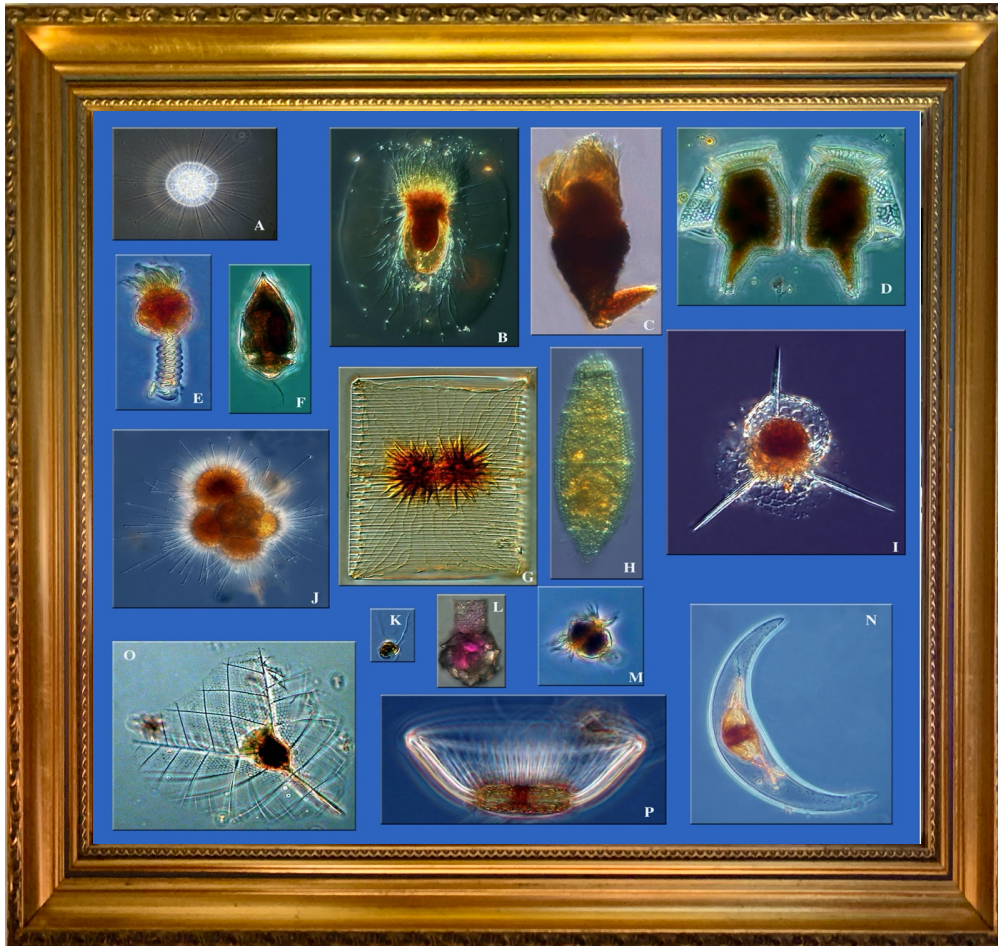


The MicroPredatorStars Gallery



We all need to eat, right? Our bodies need energy to do all the things we do, like sport, washing up, and even looking at social media. And we need materials to build new cells while we are growing, and replace cells we lose constantly, like our skin cells that flake off every day. If we don't, our bodies cannot function and give up. To obtain the correct materials in the right proportions to make new cells, and to obtain energy, we need to eat cells. Eating is the process of consuming other organisms, like plants and animals, that have cells more or less like ours. This is the food chain or food web. Most animals and a few plants eat live organisms: this is the process of predation. (Others are scavengers: they feed on dead organisms.) Predation (and scavenging) is the perpetual recycling of biological materials, the cycle of life and death that characterizes our biosphere. Predation keeps the biosphere and its populations of species healthy since, the older organisms become, the less healthy they are because some of their parts accumulate damage throughout life and eventually wear out. Digesting other organisms releases their component parts, allowing the healthy parts to be re-used to make new cells, and the less healthy parts to be biochemically "combusted" to produce energy. Predation and predators keep the biosphere vital. Predators structure the food web, and range from bacteria to lions. Let's learn about the beautiful, fascinating and absolutely essential predators in the microbial world!