

Zooplankton biomass in high latitude marine environments increases by 1-2 orders of magnitude during the spring phytoplankton bloom. This project focuses on the period preceding the bloom. Petra Lenz, Michelle Jungbluth, Russell Hopcroft, Daniel Hartline, Ann Castelfranco and others are investigating changes in the zooplankton community to assess species-specific recruitment and growth in a fjord in the Gulf of Alaska. Funded by the National Science Foundation the science team is conducting intensive depth-stratified field sampling and laboratory experiments during the winter and early spring to characterize the zooplankton and prey communities using traditional and molecular methods. The goal is to determine which species are there, how many are present, where they are in the water column, and to reveal indicators of their health.