

How many known species in the Ocean and in WoRMS?

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Since the time of Linnaeus 250 years ago, 239,000 marine species have been described and classified into 89 Phyla. The World Register of Marine Species (Appeltans *et al.*, 2012) is the most complete register of all marine species names worldwide. It holds accepted names, but also synonyms, common misspellings, and a hierarchical classification. Its online database is edited by over 200 world-leading taxonomists from 27 countries. WoRMS currently has 360,000 names for 213,000 species. The number of marine species described as new to science is growing at a current rate of 2,000 species per year. The Ocean's biodiversity contains the following Kingdoms, (number of phyla) and currently described species:

	Number of	
	Phyla	Species
Plantae	6	7,600
Chromista	11	20,000
Protozoa	7	500
Fungi	5	1,000
Bacteria	26	1,700
Archaea	4	117
Animalia	30	208,000

The most species rich groups of marine animals are:

Annelida		13,700	
	Polychaeta		12,600
Crustacea		51,700	
	Brachyura		7,000
	Amphipoda		7,000
	Isopoda		6,200
	Copepoda		10,000
	Ostracoda		9,000
Bryozoa		5,900	
Pisces		17,000	
Cnidaria		10,200	
	Hexacorallia		3,100
	Octocorallia		3,100
	Hydrozoa		3,400
Echinodermata		7,400	
Mollusca		56,700	
	Bivalvia		9,000
	Gastropoda		45,000
Nematoda		11,400	
Platyhelminthes		11,700	
Porifera		8,500	

A full overview of the number of species described, the number of times species have been described, how many more species are collected, but not yet described and how many remain undiscovered (including those that are only distinguishable by molecular techniques) will be published in a multi-author paper lead by Ward Appeltans and Mark Costello.

References

Appeltans W., P. Bouchet, G.A. Boxshall, K. Fauchald, D.P. Gordon, B.W. Hoeksema, G.C.B. Poore, R.W.M. van Soest, S. Stöhr, T.C. Walter and M.J. Costello. (Eds). 2012. World Register of Marine Species. Accessed at <http://www.marinespecies.org> on 2012-01-23.