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Effects of toxicity and zooplankton selectivity under seasonal pattern of viruses with time delay on plankton dynamics

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A mathematical model for the interacting dynamics of phytoplankton-zooplankton is proposed. The phytoplankton have ability to take refuge and release toxins to avoid over predation by zooplankton. The zooplankton are provided some additional food to persist in the system. The phytoplankton are assumed to be affected directly by an external toxic substance whereas zooplankton are affected indirectly by feeding on the affected phytoplankton. We incorporate seasonal variations in the model, assuming the level of nutrients, refuge and the rate of toxins released by phytoplankton as functions of time. Our results show that when high toxicity and refuge cause extinction of zooplankton, providing additional food supports the survival of zooplankton population and controls the phytoplankton population. Prey refuge and additional food have stabilizing effects on the system; higher values of the former results in extinction of zooplankton whereas phytoplankton disappear for larger values of the latter. We find that time delay accounts for recurrent stability switching event in the system. Seasonality in nutrients level and toxins released by phytoplankton generates higher periodic solutions while time-dependent refuge of phytoplankton causes the occurrence of a period-three solution. The possibility of finding additional food for zooplankton may push back the ecosystem to a simple stable state from a complex dynamics.

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