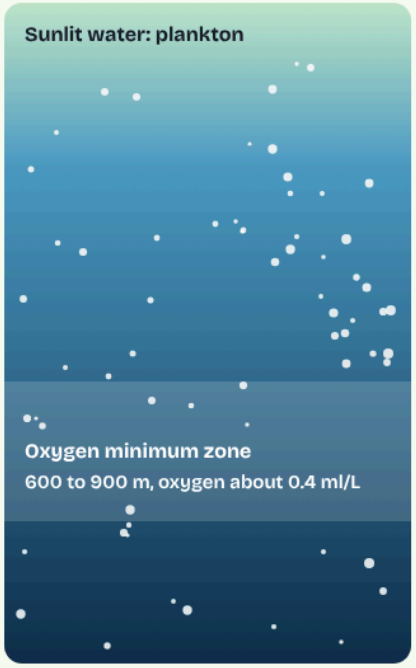
That is why

What does a vampire squid eat?

Not blood. It catches marine snow on a sticky filament, wraps it in mucus and eats it, deep in a layer with little oxygen.

A The food falls from above



Marine snow: dead plants and animals, poop, sand and dust. Some flakes fall for weeks.

B Fishing with a sticky thread

1. **Let out a filament**
   up to 8 times its body length
2. **Snow sticks to it**
   tiny hairs and touch-sensing cells
3. **Reel it in through the arms**
   can take up to 5 minutes
4. **Wrap the catch in mucus**
   made by glands in the suckers
5. **Cirri pass the ball to the mouth**
   and the squid swallows it

Two filaments; about a third of 170 squid filmed had one out.

C Living on leftovers

What was in their stomachs

- Bits of copepods
- Poop pellets
- Diatoms and radiolarians
- A few fish scales
- All bundled in mucus

36 of 43 squid caught in nets had food inside.

A tight energy budget

Lowest metabolic rate measured in any cephalopod. A gelatinous body floats without effort, and the food comes to it, so it never chases.

Few predators can live in water this low in oxygen.

Like a spider hanging one sticky thread under a busy restaurant floor.

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