

Seashore safari



I see seashells on the seashore

Do you know your barnacles from your limpets or your sea potato from your sandhopper?

Can you tell the difference between a common whelk and a dog whelk at a glance?

Well, if you like scouring the beach for bits of driftwood and shells or you love the natural treasures the tide brings in - but you're not sure what everything is - our Seashore safari will reveal the secrets of rockpools and the strandline.

The strandline is the top bit of the beach where man-made and natural objects are left washed up as the tide recedes. And it's a totally fascinating place!

Take our Seashore safari with you every time you head to the beach and see how many seashore surprises you can find.

Visit our website for more fascinating facts and intriguing information about our UK seas
www.mcsuk.org

Who are the Marine Conservation Society?

We're a bunch of people who love the sea! Our work is supported by thousands of amazing members and volunteers.

Today, our ocean is in poor health because of decades of human activity. But we're determined to change this by working with communities, businesses and governments.

For more than 30 years, we've been the voice of the sea. We want to see a cleaner, better-protected, healthier ocean. One we can all enjoy.

There are plenty of ways you can help the ocean. Here are just a few ideas:



Beach cleans and litter surveys

Our year-round beach clean and survey programme helps us identify where rubbish comes from so we can help stop it getting on the beach. Find a clean near you on our website.



Sea Champions

Join our network of active volunteers who spread our message in their local area all over the UK.



Marine life sightings

Spotted a basking shark, turtle or jellyfish? Tell us about it at the wildlife sightings section on the website.

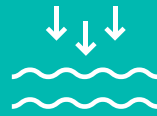


Learn more about our seas

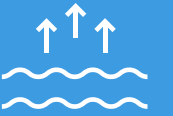
Explore our amazing UK seas and find out how you can look after them with our learning resources for schools, groups, families and young people.



Sea life in shallow water and rockpools



Sea life along the strandline (high tide mark)



Barnacles

These animals live upside down, permanently stuck to the rock with their legs sticking upwards ready to catch drifting food.



Common limpet

A snail with a homing instinct! It grazes on algae while the tide is in and returns to the same spot, called a home scar, when the tide retreats.



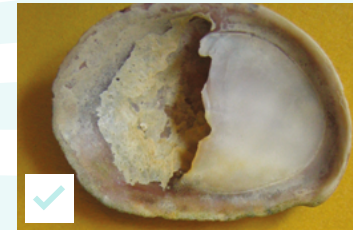
Painted top shell

A tall shell with stripes of purple and white in a striking conical shape. The body of this "snail" is also colourfully flecked with purple, red and brown.



Purple/flat top shell

This shell is a flattish cone shape with stripes of reddish purple.



Slipper limpet

Accidentally introduced to England from North America and now found in huge numbers. It has no predators in Europe.



Cockle

Cockles spot predators using their many antennae and eyes. By extending their 'leg' outside the shell, they can jump around 10cm.



Razorshell

Shaped like an old-fashioned cut throat razor, these animals live buried end-up in the sand.



Common whelk

A large edible sea snail, twice the size of the dog whelk, the empty shell makes a good home for hermit crabs so please leave these shells on the shore.



Dog whelk

Meat-eating sea snails that drill holes into limpets, turn their insides into soup and suck up the yummy contents!



Common starfish

The familiar five arms and usual orange colour are unmistakable. They move with their tube feet and eat with their stomachs inside out!



Cushion star

Cushion stars are similar to other starfish but have shorter, stubbier arms. They can be found hiding under rocks.



Beadlet anemone

Has a band of "beads" around the top of its body, hence the name. When the tide goes out they retract their tentacles so they won't dry out.



Common whelk egg cases

Puffy balls of white eggcases laid by the common whelk. Used to be used by sailors as wash balls!



Cuttlebone

Cuttlefish aren't fish at all, but are molluscs related to squid and octopus. This structure once gave the shape to the cuttlefish body.



Sea potato

A heart shaped sea urchin adapted for burrowing. It lives just below the surface on clean sand.



Catshark egg case

A catshark egg case also known as a mermaid's purse. The entwining tendrils attach to seaweed and the egg case is washed up once the animal hatches.



Snakelocks anemone

These anemones can have up to 200 tentacles! Their tentacles remain out all of the time, they don't retract them like other anemones.



Velvet swimming crab

Its upper shell has a feeling of soft velvet and its blood red eyes and aggressive demeanor have given it the common name "Devil Crab".



Hermit crab

The most obvious feature is the home a hermit crab lives in: usually a snail shell. Its body is soft and shaped to fit inside spiral-shaped shells.



Common shore crab

A common rock pool or shallow water species. Males have a triangular shape on their stomachs - females a semi-circular shape.



Skate/Ray egg case

The egg case of a true skate also known as mermaid's purse. The horns anchor to the seafloor or seaweed and the egg case is washed up once the animal hatches.



Bladderwrack

The small air-filled bladders along the fronds help this seaweed to float towards the surface of the water to photosynthesise.



Kelp holdfast

Curious oddments that can look like skeleton sections, but each is simply the holdfast, or 'roots' of large seaweeds known as kelp.



Hornwrack

Remains of a colony of hundreds of tiny animals called bryozoans, or 'moss animals'. It has a distinctive lemon-like smell when fresh.



Common blenny

These fish can change colour to blend in with their surroundings. They have sharp teeth for crunching barnacles off rocks.



Rock goby

Gobies are often confused with blennies but they have two distinctly separate fins on their backs whereas blennies only have one back (dorsal) fin.



Prawn

They have a transparent body, with black stripes. It has a serrated rostrum that looks a bit like a mohican between its eyes.



Mussel

Mussels do indeed have very strong muscles that help keep their shells clamped shut. Found attached to the rocks. Their empty shells can also wash ashore.



Dunlin

The dunlin is the most widespread and common wader in Europe. It has a slightly down-curved bill and a black belly patch in breeding plumage.



Oystercatcher

Striking black and white plumage with long bright orange-red bills, oystercatchers eat a third of their body weight every day.



Moon jellyfish

Mostly harmless, though may sting sensitive skin. Jellyfish are the favourite food of the leatherback turtle.



Sandhopper

This shrimplike creature lives amongst seaweeds on the beach, they are found hopping around when the tide is out.



Explore responsibly

- Leave animals where you find them.
- Carefully lift and replace any rocks you move and leave attached seaweed in place. If you want to take a couple of seashells home only take the empty shells (like limpets and mussels) and leave shells that could provide a home for hermit crabs (like whelks and periwinkles).



Keep it tidy

- Take your rubbish home – don't bury it or burn it.
- Poop scoop your dog's waste then bin it responsibly.



Watch with care

- Watch quietly from a distance, especially near birds and seals with pups.
- Control your dog and keep it on a lead near birds and seals.



Mind your step

- Keep to established paths and dune boardwalks.
- If you dig holes in the beach, please fill them up again.
- Don't climb up or go near the top or bottom of a cliff.
- Check tide times to avoid being cut off.
- Keep away from soft sand and mud, and beware of slippery rocks.



Have fun!



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