

Echinoderms — sea stars, urchins, cucumbers



Ochre Star

Pisaster ochraceus
To 14" in diameter

Orange, purple, or brown with a network of white spines.

Five stout arms. Shorter, thicker arms than mottled star.

Leather Star

Asteriopa imbricata
To 12" in diameter

Upper surface is gray with patches of red, brown, and purple. Smooth to the touch, with a garlic-like odor.

Pink Short-Spined Star

Pisaster brevispinus
To 26" in diameter

Pink to almost white with short spines. Five large, stiff arms.

Mottled Star

Evasterias troschelii
To 16" in diameter

Similar to ochre star but smaller disc. Orange, brown, or blue-gray with five long, slender arms.



Sunflower Star

Pycnopodia helianthoides
To 39" in diameter

Yellow, orange, brown, pink, red, or purple. A broad, soft disc with up to 24 arms.



Stimpson's Sun Star

Solaster stimpsoni
To 16" in diameter

Blue, pink, red, or orange with a blue or purple stripe down each slender arm. Usually 10 arms.



Blood Star

Henricia leviuscula
To 8" in diameter

Usually blood red, often with a gray patch. Typically with five slender arms.



Green Sea Urchin

Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis
To 3 1/4" wide, spines to 1"

Usually green-brown with short spines.



Slipper Cucumber

Psolus chitonoides
To 5" diameter

Red to pale yellow with hard plates. Red tentacles have white tips. Resembles a chiton when out of the water.



Orange Sea Cucumber

Cucumaria miniata
To 4-8" long

Orange-red to brown with rows of brown tube feet. Bright orange feeding tentacles at one end of body.

Other



Shiny Orange Sea Squirt

Cnemidocarpa finmarkiensis
To 3" long

Shiny orange in color. Soft and does not hold shape out of water. Look for two siphons protruding from the smooth mound shape.



Kelp Lace Bryozoan

Membranipora serrilamella
To 1-7" in diameter

White crust-like growths typically on algae. Circular in shape but several colonies may grow together forming large patches with lobed margin.

Explore the Shore Field Guide

Mollusks — clams, snails, chitons, octopus



Mossy Chiton

Mopalia muscosa
To 2 3/4" long

Eight plates that are brown, gray, or black. Outer girdle covered in stiff hairs.



Lined Chiton

Tonicella lineate
To 2" long

Eight plates with light and dark zigzag lines in a variety of colors from pink to orange-red.



Red Octopus

Mantle to 4"
Octopus rubescens

Arms to four times body length. Can be red to brown with white mottling. Rough skin.



Nuttall's Cockle

Clinocardium nuttallii
To 5 1/2" long.

Shell is as high as it is long, covered with prominent ribs. Heart-shaped from side view.



Lewis's Moon Snail

Lunatia lewisii
To 5 1/2" high

Yellowish to brown shell with six rounded whorls. Enormous pink to brown, fleshy foot.



Checkered Periwinkle

Littorina scutulata
To 5/8" long

Smooth brown or black, elongated shell. Often checkered with white spots. Usually found in the splash zone, can only survive for a short time underwater.



Pacific Blue Mussel

Mytilus trossulus

To 6" long, usually smaller. Two blue to black shells, sometimes tan or brown.



Rock Jingle

Podoesmus macroschisma
To 5 1/4" long

Attaches to rocks with low profile. Gray-white upper shell is larger and covers donut shaped lower shell.



Ribbed Limpet

Lottia digitalis
To 1 1/4" long

Ribbed; olive-green to brown with white blotches or dots.



Rough Keyhole Limpet

Diodora aspera
To 2 3/4" long

Oval shell light brown to gray, often with stripes. Ridges radiate from top of shell. Prominent off-center opening at top of shell.



Opalescent Nudibranch

Hermisenda crassicornis
To 2" long

Bright colored sea slug with light colored mantle, orange stipe along dorsal side, and white stripes along the cerata (hair-like projections).



Shag Rug Nudibranch

Aeolidia papillosa
To 3" long

Gray, tan, or brown with many hair-like cerata.

Arthropods — crabs, shrimp, barnacles



Photographed by Randy Shuman

Red Rock Crab

Cancer productus
Shell to 8" wide,
female to 6 1/4" wide
Brick red fan-shaped
carapace with back-tipped
pincers.



Graceful Crab

Cancer gracilis
Shell to 4 1/2" wide
Legs purple, claws purple with
white tips.



Purple Shore Crab

Hemigrapsus nudus
Shell to 2.5" wide,
Hides under rocks. Purple in
color with dark spots on the
claws. No hair or setae on
legs.



Hairy Shore Crab

Hemigrapsus oregonensis
Shell to 2" wide
Hides under rocks. Color can
be purple, gray, green, white,
or mottled. Look for "hairs" or
setae on their legs.



Kelp Crab

Pugettia producta
Shell to 3 1/2" wide
Olive, brown, or red in color.
Usually in or on seaweed.



Black-clawed Crab

Lophopanopeus bellus
Shell to 1 1/2" wide
Boxy shell with conical claw
tips. Color can be purple, red,
or brown with black claw tips.
Often stiffens with claws out
when handled.



Photographed by Randy Shuman

Hermit Crab

Various Species
To 3" long
Large, oval, black eyes.
Orange, red, or brown in
color. Can be found in a variety
of shells.



Isopod

Various Species
To 1" long
Green, brown, red-brown, or
black in color. Found typically
gripped to the underside of a
rock or piece of kelp. Smooth
armored plates on back with
several pairs of legs ventrally.



Coonstripe Shrimp

Pandalus danae
To 5 1/2" long
Translucent body with reddish
brown stripes, thin white lines,
and blue spots.



Giant Barnacle

Elassochirus tenuimanus
To 2 3/4" diameter, 4 7/8" high
Volcano shaped. Dirty white
shell with bright purple,
yellow, or red tissue visible
near the "beak."



Photographed by Seattle Aquarium

Acorn Barnacle

Balanus glandula
To 3/4" in diameter,
3/8" high
Volcano-shaped. White to
gray. Inner plates close tightly
to protect the animal from
predators and low tides.



Photo by Rosario Beach Marine Laboratory

Thatched Barnacle

Semibalanus cariosus
To 1 1/2" in diameter,
2 3/8" high
Volcano shaped.
White to grayish, with many
downward pointing spines
covering steep walls.

Cnidarians — sea anemones, jellies, corals



Painted Anemone

Urticina felina
To 4" across, to 10" high
Colors vary from green with
red spots to solid colors
including light yellow-brown,
white, or red. Tentacles similar
to column color.



Giant Plumose Anemone

Metridium giganteum
To 4" across at base,
4-39" high
White, brown, or orange body
with frilly tentacles.



Photographed by Liz Dawson

Moon Jelly

Aurelia Labiata
4-16" in diameter
Translucent, bell-shaped jelly
with 4 round or horseshoe
shaped gonads visible on top.



Egg Yolk Jelly

Phacellophora camtschatica
To 2' across, tentacles to 20'
Translucent with an
egg yolk-yellow center.
Caution! Tentacles can sting.



Lion's Mane Jelly

Cyanea capillata
To 20" across, tentacles to 10'
Yellow-brown to orange, flat
top. **Caution!** Tentacles can
sting

Worms



Calcareous Tube Worm

Serpula vermicularis
To 4" long
White tube with red, orange,
or pink feather-type
tentacles.



Parchment Worm

Spirochaetopterus costarum
To 8" long
Fragile, jointed tubes
protruding from sandy
substrates. Opaque white to
brown in color.

Fish



Tidepool Sculpin

Oligocottus maculosus
To 3 1/2" long
Color varies from brown to
green to reddish on dorsal
side, fading to lighter hues on
underside. Five irregular dark
saddles across back.



Gunnel

Various species
To 12" long
Gray, green or brown with
long, eel-like body.
Sometimes found under rocks
in the low tide zone.



Northern Clingfish

Gobiesox maeandricus
To 6.5" long
Gray, green to dark black with
a light stripe connecting eyes
and light speckling throughout
the body. Suction cup like fin
on ventral side.



Fish Eggs

Various species
Clusters up to 2" wide
Gray, green, purple, blue, red,
yellow or orange. Found
attached to a hard surface.