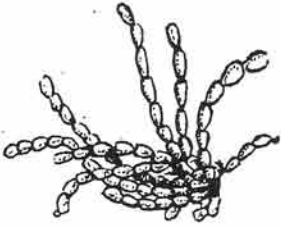


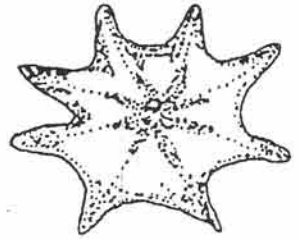
COMMON SEASHORE ORGANISMS



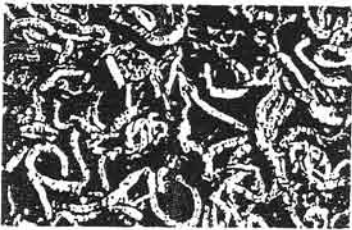
Neptune's Necklace is a brown alga that flourishes in rock pools and on horizontal intertidal rock surfaces. The fronds consist of a string of round vesicles or beads which are full of air to keep the plant upright in the water. These beads have small light yellow spots indicating the position of reproductive cells. Many minute and juvenile crustaceans and molluscs shelter underneath this seaweed.



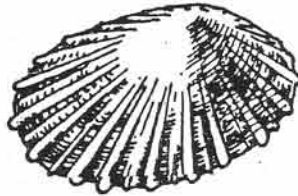
Cunjevoi, a very ancient form of life, features a tough leather external casing which is attached to the seaward side of rock platforms. They feed by pumping very large quantities of water through their bodies when the tide is in. Inside their body is a large sieve, which collects food particles from the water. (BL 20)



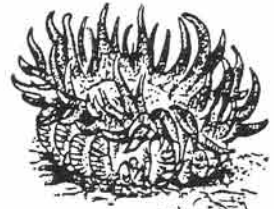
Seastars. Coming in many shapes and sizes, seastars are often difficult to spot because they are masters of disguise, blending superbly into their surroundings. The two most common seastars on our temperate coast graze on seaweed, though they can be opportunistic feeders eating decaying organisms. Generally starfish protrude their stomachs outside their mouths, envelope their food and begin to digest their food outside their bodies.



Galeolaria are filter-feeding worms that live in densely packed calcareous tubes. The worms stay permanently in these tubes eating the nutrient particles from the water around them. Their black feeding tentacles pop out when covered with water. Commonly incorrectly called "Sydney Coral", *Galeolaria* is a worm living in a shell casing, not a coral.



Limpets have a shell like a conical cap. They move slowly across the rocks grazing on microscopic plants or larger seaweeds. Some limpets return to their home-base; a circular scar on the rocks after feeding. Limpets and Chitons, use the suction pressure from their very large foot to hold onto the rock surface. (BL. 20 Note 1)



Sea Anemones are "sit and wait" predators. They are tubular jelly-like animals seemingly attached to onespot. They can move if conditions are uncomfortable. At the top is a mouth surrounded by tentacles covered in stinging cells that have tiny sticky threads inside. Prey is caught by sticky threads and are paralysed by the stinging cells. The food is then drawn into the sea anemone's mouth where it is digested with chemicals. Unwanted material is regurgitated. Sea anemones also eat nutrients by sifting fine particles in the water.



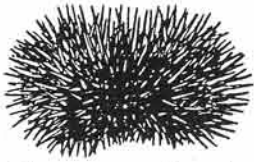
Barnacles are crustaceans and closely related to prawns. In their juvenile stage they drift in the ocean as larvae. When washed onto the shore they firmly cement themselves to the rocks, building their limy homes around themselves. Barnacles are filter-feeders, opening their shell plates when covered by water and collect food particles with their hairy feet.



Mulberry Whelks are small and distinctive snails with raised dark "Mulberry" lumps on the shell. They are carnivores, feeding on bivalve molluscs, limpets and barnacles. The whelk will sit on its meal, softening part of the shell with chemicals from its foot. With its tongue shaped like a carpenter's rasp, it scrapes away the softened shell eventually allowing access to the edible insides.



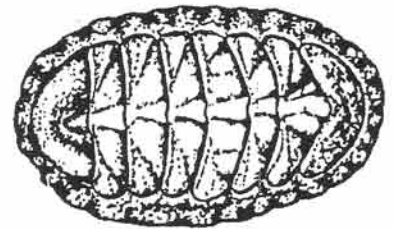
Zebra Trochids or Periwinkles are among the commonest molluscs of our rocky shores. They are spiralled shells with alternate black and white stripes. The width and number of bands are determined by changing environmental factors. These snails feed on microscopic seaweed. (BL. 20 Note 1)



Sea Urchins are usually spherical in shape with a flattened top and bottom. They have a test of close fitting limy plates covered with a delicate living skin. The plates bear moveable spines. The animal walks aided by it's retractable tube feet. The suckers on the end of the tube feet also help the animal to turn itself over and hold on to the rocks despite heavy wave action. (BL 10)



Sponges classify as the simplest group of multi-cellular animals. They do not have tissues and organs but are made up of a number of different types of cell, which forms the sponge. This structure is held together by spicules of lime or silica. On the surface are hundreds of little pores through which water enters, circulates through the sponge and leaves by much larger openings. Sponge cells filter sea water for food.



Chitons are ancient molluscs, with eight shell plates and a broad foot which allows them to hold on very tightly to the surface of the rocks. Chitons are algal feeders; feeding on both microscopic and larger plants. Chiton's are light sensitive and are usually found under boulders or sheltered shady areas. Chitons and Limpets are more active during high tide. (BL 20 Note 1)



Cartrut Shell. This large carnivorous whelk features deep parallel grooves in its shell. Like other predatory snails, this whelk features a special indentation or canal at the base of the shell. When searching for a tasty meal, the whelk protrudes its siphon through this indentation into the water. The siphon sucks in water which passes over the equivalent of a nose, identifying nearby prey. (BL 20 Note 1)



Turban Snails are vegetarian grazers of large seaweed and inhabit the mid to lower regions of the rock platform. The shape of the shell reminds us of a turban head dress. Turban snails close their opercula (trapdoor) when threatened by a predator. When people find these trapdoors, they don't realise they were the front door of a much larger animal. (BL 20. Sydney & Military, turban snails have a minimum legal length of 7.5cm.)



Crabs that live on rocky shores feed on the hard rock substratum. For this reason they are opportunistic scavengers and will eat just about anything decomposing. Some crabs will eat small snails and limpets. Crushing crabs have very strong pincer-like claws to break apart the animal they are feeding on. Crabs also use their claws to carry their food to their mouth. Crabs are extremely sensitive to any nearby movements or vibrations. (BL 10)



Octopuses are highly intelligent predatory molluscs and one of the largest and most complex invertebrates. The animals expand the muscular sac surrounding the body to suck in water and then squirt it out through the tubular siphon above the head. This water jet can propel the animal quickly backwards. Octopuses have eight sucker bearing arms & feed on crabs, lobsters and several species of bivalves and snails. (Cannot be taken from ocean rock platforms or Sydney Harbour)

Rock platforms have a high diversity of life with complex relationships. If too many organisms are taken, it can interfere with the whole eco-system.

You must hold a NSW Fishing Licence to collect anything from the rock platform. All organisms there have a legal limit on the number that can be taken (bag limit [BL]). No octopus or abalone can be taken from Central Coast rock platforms.

If fishing, obey all regulations regarding size and number of catch and bring your bait with you – please don't collect it off the rocks.

Ocean & Coastal Care Initiatives Inc. Contact: harvis@ozemail.com.au