

THANET COAST SEASHORE SAFARI

Rockpooling fun



North East Kent



Marine Protected Area



How many
fascinating
creatures can
you find?

The challenge

This booklet will help you explore and identify some of the coastal and marine life found around the North East Kent Marine Protected Area.

The area is internationally and nationally important for wintering birds and marine life. The Thanet coast provides a great opportunity for you to explore the chalk reef, rockpools and sandy beaches for its fascinating rockpool and shore life.

How many shorelife creatures can you find or see?

Use this pocket guide to help you explore and mark your finds as:

- Marine life that you see alive
- Empty shells, dead things and drift (washed ashore)

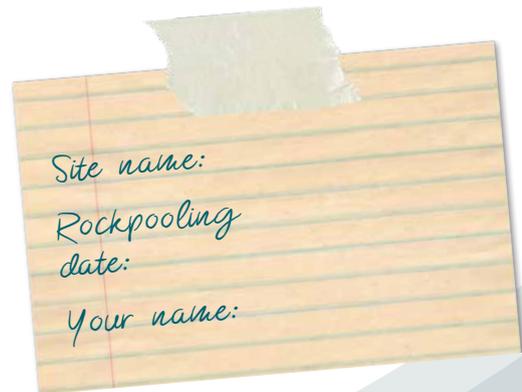
Take photos or draw pictures of anything interesting you find or cannot identify.



What next?

Let us know what you have found by recording these on our Shorelife Recording Form for around the NE Kent coast. Take two or three images of any unusual finds, or things you are not sure about. The form can be found at: **thanetcoast.org.uk**

Good luck and have fun!



Rockpooling responsibly

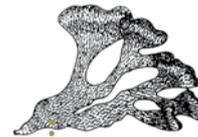
- **Walk very carefully:** Rocks and seaweed may be very sharp or slippery; and rockpools are 'home' to our shorelife
- **Never pull wildlife or seaweed off the rocks/reef.** If they become unattached, then they may not survive!
- When looking under rocks or seaweed, **always carefully return them back to their original position.** This is their home that you're turning upside down!
- If using a tub, **ensure you have some clean seawater** to look at marine creatures you find, and **always return them to the same rockpool afterwards.**
- **Try not to have more than one crab in any tub, and keep other wildlife safe in a separate tub** otherwise they might fight, eat or injure each other!
- **Take care** searching, handling stones, shells and barnacles, as there are many sharp surfaces around.
- **Wash and clean your hands** after rockpooling.



Please take care observing living creatures. Do not hurt or damage us or take us away from our home!

Strandline

When the tide is in, you can still find interesting clues of marine life washed up and left by the high tide at the top of the shore along the 'strandline'. This includes detached seaweed, shells, egg cases, pieces of animals and unsightly beach litter.



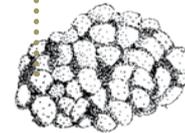
● **Hornwrack**
(colonial bryozoan - animal)



● **Finger bryozoan**
(colonial bryozoan - animal)



● **Cuttlefish eggs**



● **Whelk egg cases**



● **Cuttlefish bone**



● **Mermaid's glove**
(sponge)

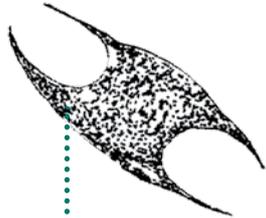


● **White weed**
(colonial hydroid - animal)

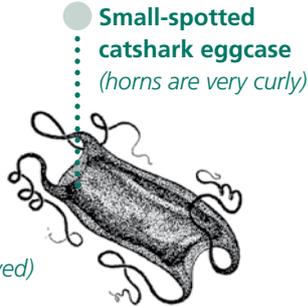
The strandline is a great place for coastal birds - please give us space to feed and rest.

Mermaid's purses

These are the eggcases of skates, rays and catsharks found on the strandline. You can find out how to identify and record the species on The Shark Trust website www.sharktrust.org



● **Skate or ray eggcase**
(horns are straight or curved)

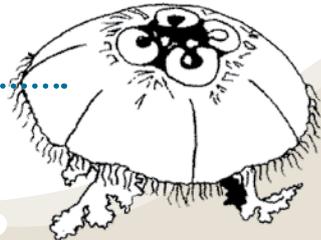


● **Small-spotted catshark eggcase**
(horns are very curly)

Jellyfish

Jellyfish can get washed ashore. **Never touch** them with bare hands and seek medical help for severe stings. You can take a picture and identify the species later online and send your record to MCS's national jellyfish survey. www.mcsuk.org/sightings

● **Moon jellyfish** ●.....●



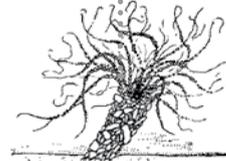
Bristle worms

Look for the homes of these soft segmented worms - made of calcium (chalk), within sand, or from sand grains.



● **Keel worm**
(found on rocks)

● **Sand mason worm**
(seen poking out of sand)



● **Lug worm**
(found within sand)



● **Spiral worm**
(found on seaweed)



SHORE FACT TIDES

The tidal cycle is the biggest factor affecting life on the shore and results from a combination of the earth's rotation and the sun and moon's gravitational pull on the sea. This gives around two high and two low tides a day - but the rhythm varies daily, as does the amount of shore that is exposed.



Molluscs: Snails & shells

Molluscs often have a hard shell covering their soft bodies and a large foot - some have one shell (and these are grazers or carnivores) and some have two (bivalves and these are the filter feeders). Some have no visible shell at all such as sea slugs, cuttlefish and squid.

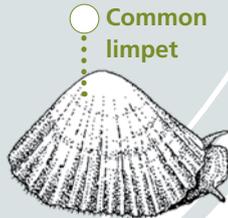


Common whelk

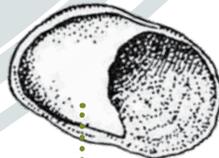
Dog whelk



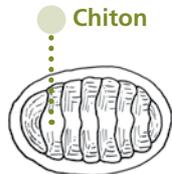
Netted dog whelk



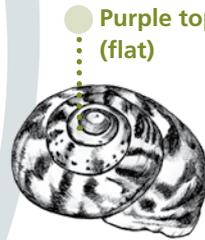
Common limpet



Slipper limpet



Chiton



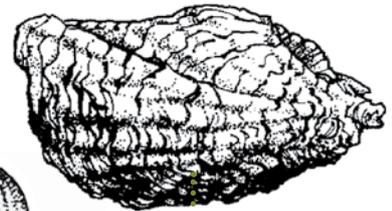
Purple topshell (flat)



Grey top shell



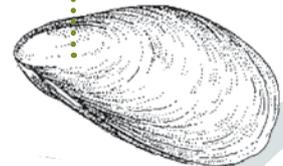
Edible winkle



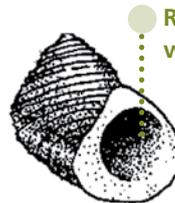
Pacific oyster



Flat winkle



Common mussel



Rough winkle



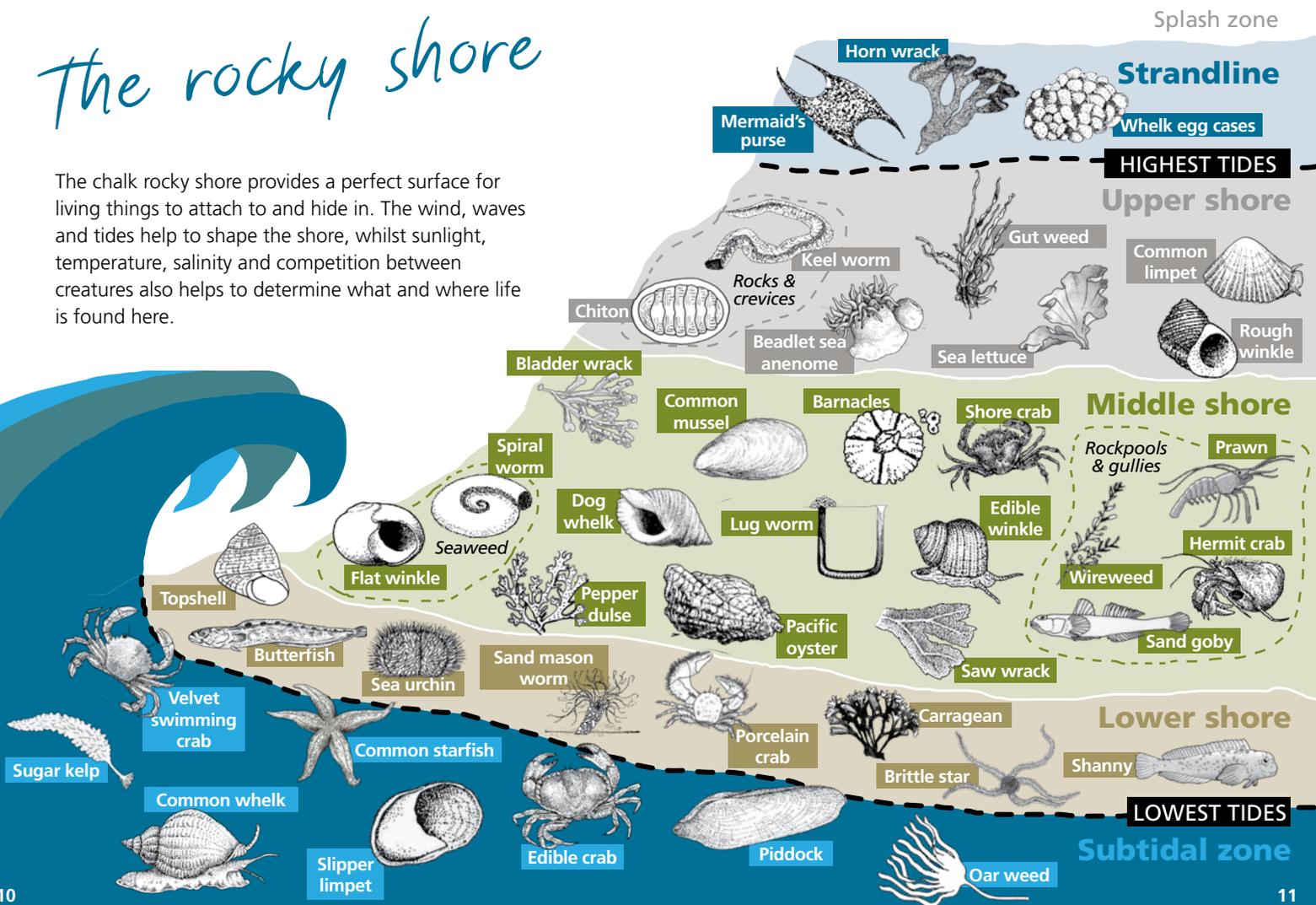
Piddock



What shells can you spot?

The rocky shore

The chalk rocky shore provides a perfect surface for living things to attach to and hide in. The wind, waves and tides help to shape the shore, whilst sunlight, temperature, salinity and competition between creatures also helps to determine what and where life is found here.

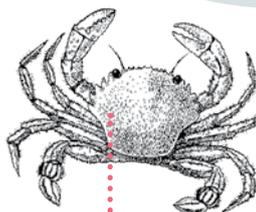


Crustaceans

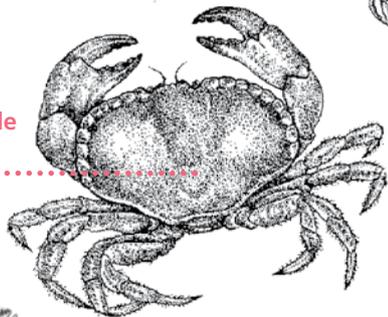
Most crustaceans have hard external skeletons and jointed legs. These include crabs, lobsters, squat lobsters, prawns, shrimps and barnacles.



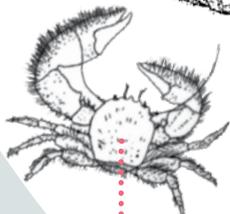
Shore crab



Velvet swimming crab



Edible crab



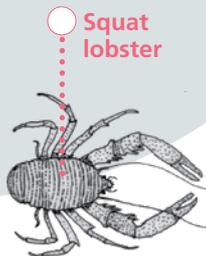
Broad clawed porcelain crab



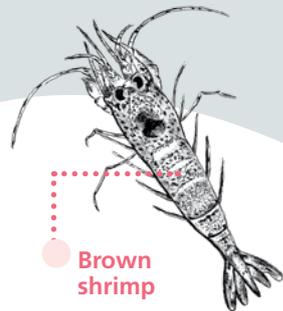
Long clawed porcelain crab



Hermit crab



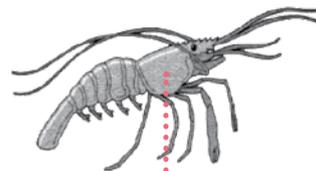
Squat lobster



Brown shrimp



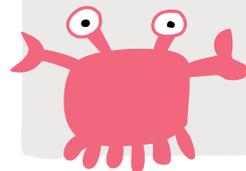
Barnacles



Prawn

SHORE FACTS Growing up!

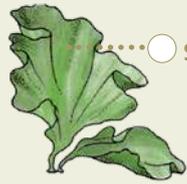
Most crustaceans grow by shedding or moulting their hard outer exoskeleton and expanding by another 1/3rd of their size each time. They hide until it hardens again, to avoid getting eaten. So if you find a crab that looks dead, but much lighter, you may have an empty shell - and it could be alive elsewhere!



Hermit crabs borrow their shells each time to grow, and barnacles build their shells around them.

Seaweed

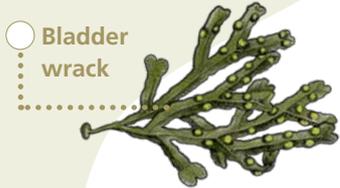
Marine algae tend to be green, brown or red. They do not need roots - they get their energy from sunlight and absorb nutrients straight from the sea.



Sea lettuce



Gut weed



Bladder wrack



Saw wrack



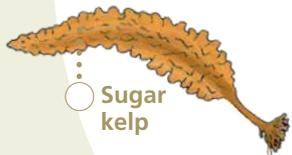
Wireweed



Carrageenan



Pepper dulse



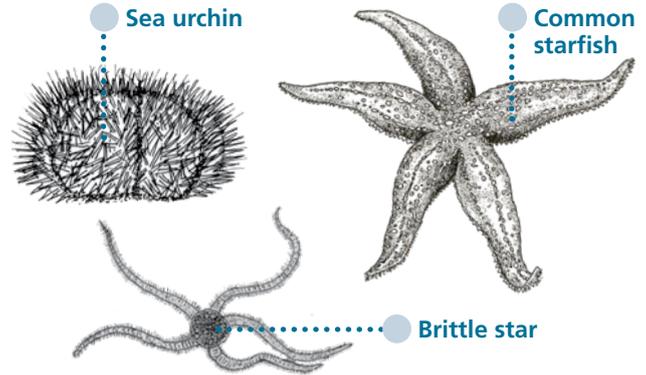
Sugar kelp



Oar weed

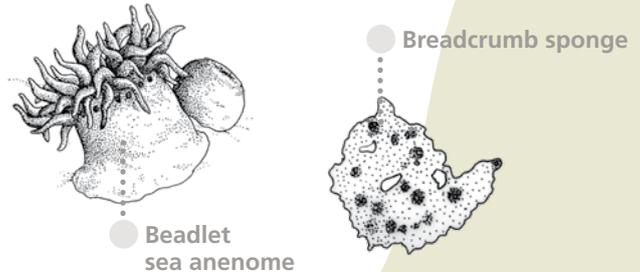
Starfish and sea urchin

Stars of the sea: covered in a spiny skin.



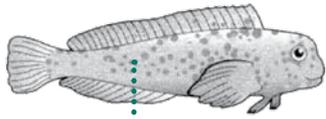
Anemones and sponges

Anemones are the animal flowers of the sea with tiny stinging cells to catch their prey. Sponges are multi-celled soft animals with a surface of pore openings.



Fish

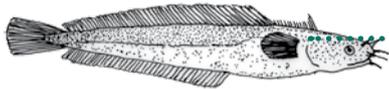
Shore fish have internal bones, gills for breathing, fins and tails for swimming. Some have adapted to living on the coast such as changing skin colour to blend in, or slime (instead of scales on the shanny) to keep damp whilst the tide is out.



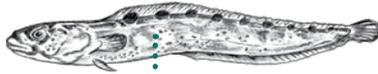
Shanny



Sand goby



Five-bearded rockling



Butterfish



Long-spined Scorpion fish

Other finds

Please use this space to list, describe or draw anything else you see or find:

SHORE FACT GEOLOGY

The white chalk cliffs and reef are made of billions of shells of tiny animals and algae that lived in the sea over 85 million years ago.

If you're lucky you can also find **fossils** on the shore.

Stay safe!

- **Check tides** - to avoid getting cut-off by an incoming tide. It is best to visit on an outgoing tide.
- **Check the weather and wear appropriate clothing** (e.g windproofs/waterproofs if windy/wet; and take water and protection from the sun if it is hot)
- **Wear appropriate footwear** (e.g Wellington boots or something with good ankle support).
- **Know your location** - read bay information signs, check for lifeguard cover, know where to find emergency services, and avoid any local hazards.

Useful numbers

- Emergencies: **999**
- Non-emergencies (Police): **101**
- Environment Agency (shoreline pollution): **0800 807060**
- HM Coastguard (Dover): **01304 210008**
- Kent and Essex IFCA: **01843 585310**
- Stranded mammals (BDMLR): **01825 765546**
- Thanet Council: **01843 577000**

Find out more

● [Thanetcoast.org.uk](https://www.thanetcoast.org.uk)

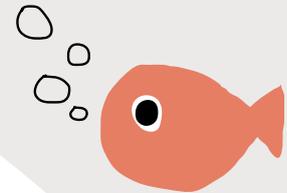
The Thanet Coast Project runs events, including scavenger hunts and seashore safaris that can help you explore further.

School or organised groups can get online advice and use a notification form for their trips or beach cleans. There is an online educational toolkit for schools, and family Coastal Explorer 'Tracker packs' and Coastal Community Beach Huts available for hire.

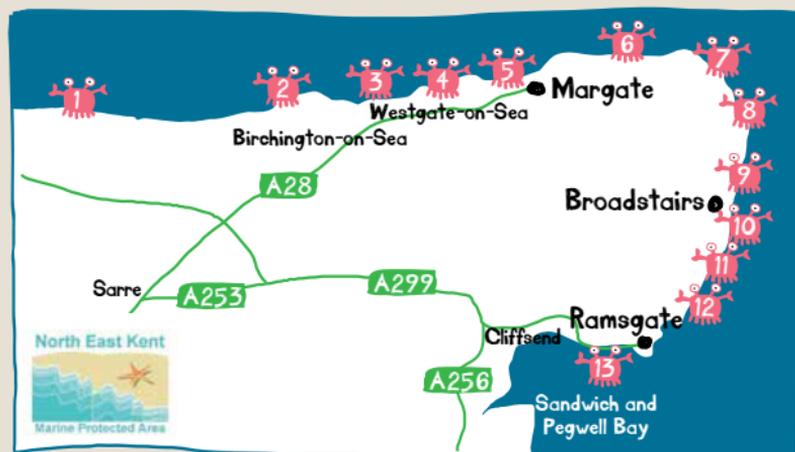
The coastal warden/guardian scheme trains local volunteers to help with marine conservation projects, and adopt a beach to look after.

● [Kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)

The Kent Wildlife Trust runs regular Shoresearch Surveys of marine life around Kent's coast as part of the local marine conservation work programme.



Rockpooling map



1. Reculver Country Park
2. Minnis Bay (east)
3. West Bay, Westgate
4. St Mildred's Bay
5. Nayland Rock, Margate
6. Walpole Bay
7. Botany Bay
8. Joss Bay
9. Stone Bay
10. Louisa Bay
11. Dumpton Gap
12. Ramsgate Eastcliff
13. Ramsgate Western Undercliff

GUARDIANS
OF THE DEEP

 **HERITAGE**
FUND

