

Kelp Forest Animals

http://inchinapinch.com/hab_pgs/marine/kelp/animals.htm

From its base on the rocks to its broad canopy above, a kelp forest provides homes to a surprising variety of creatures. They come in all shapes and sizes. Below you will find pictures of some of these creatures along with fascinating facts about each one.

Garibaldi
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Garibaldi - adult garibaldi utilize their bright orange coloration and a loud clicking sound to indicate their territory. They are very aggressive and will even nip or threaten divers! They can grow to a length of 14 inches and can live up to 17 years! The male garibaldi carefully tends a nesting area of red algae onto which he entices the female to lay her eggs. He guards the eggs until they hatch.



Ocean Sunfishmola
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Ocean Sunfish - on first sight, the Sunfish appears to be all head and no body! The mouth of the Ocean Sunfish, also known as the Mola Mola, is made for slurping up jellyfish! Recorded up to two tons, this gentle giant inhabits all tropical and temperate seas. The Ocean Sunfish lays up to 5,000,000 eggs at one time! They are often seen basking at the surface where their long dorsal fin is often mistaken for that of a shark.

Brown Cup Coral
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Brown Cup Coral- like all cup corals, this species grows within a vase-shaped structure made almost entirely of calcium carbonate. Delicate flower-like polyps emerge when the coral is feeding. This coral is usually found in colors ranging from yellow to purple, gray, green, and brown. It is found throughout the Indo-Pacific region.



Jellyfish

West Coast Sea Nettle Jellyfish - jellyfish lack brains, eyes, ears, gills, and heart. Totally transparent, they are 97 percent water. Simple sensors around the bell rim let jellyfish know whether they are heading up or down, into the light or away from it. Using jet propulsion, jellies can swim up and down in search of their zooplankton food. Jellies have been on the earth for over 650 million years. They were here before dinosaurs and sharks!

Ostrich Plume Bryozoan
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Ostrich Plume Bryozoan – colonial microscopic animals that occur in both freshwater and seawater. They are often known as moss animals. Members of the group form colonies of varying size and shape and grow on other objects. The texture of a colony varies from either being soft and

gelatinous, or tufted with leaf-like fronds or forming hard calcified skeletons like a coral.

Gray Whale

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Gray Whale - between October and February the Gray whale migrates south to Baja, returning north to the Arctic again between February and July. This 'round trip' migration of between 20,000 and 32,000 miles every year is believed to be the longest of any mammal! Gray whales have been observed entering kelp forests to escape predation from killer whales and also to feed on invertebrates.

Grebe

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Grebe - at first glance, grebes resemble ducks but differ anatomically by having slender pointed bills, lobed toes, and legs that are set far back on the body. Their rear-placed legs makes walking difficult, consequently, grebes are rarely seen on land. Grebes have many unusual behavioral characteristics such as carrying their downy young on their backs, eating their own feathers, and exhibiting elaborate courtship displays.

Grebes can be seen diving into drift kelp looking for dinner!

Sea Otter



Sea Otter - the most efficient predator of the sea urchin is the sea otter. Sea otters help keep the population of sea urchins in check in the kelp forest. As an anchor to prevent drifting away while they sleep, sea otters wrap themselves in kelp. Often they place their paws over

their eyes so they can sleep during the daylight.

Light Bulb Tunicate
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Light Bulb Tunicates - there are approximately 1,300 different species of tunicates! Most tunicates belong to a class known as sea squirts. The body of an adult tunicate is quite simple, being essentially a sack with two siphons through which water enters and exits. Water is filtered inside the sack-shaped body. It is in this manner that the tunicate gathers nourishment.

White-sided Dolphin
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White-sided Dolphin- Pacific white-sided dolphins are among the fastest and most acrobatic and aerial of all dolphin species. They can swim up to 25 mph! Pacific white-sided dolphins can hold their breath for at least 7-10 minutes underwater. They may form huge herds or pods of 2,000 or more during seasonal movements!

Isopod



Isopod - these small insect-like creatures are about an inch and a half long, and resemble a centipede. They chew through the surface of the kelp fronds, leaving little trails behind. If left unchecked, they can rapidly multiply and destroy a kelp forest! Rockfish, kelp bass, and perches feed on the kelp

isopods, helping keep their numbers in check.

California sea Lion
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California Sea Lion - the large eyes of the sea lion are adapted for low-light conditions and are specially designed for clear viewing under water. The nostrils can be closed when animal is under water. The long whiskers improve sensory ability in murky water. They are thought to be used to detect vibrations produced by swimming fish.

Sea Urchins



Purple Sea Urchin- the sea urchin gets its name from an Old English word for the spiny hedgehog, a land animal similar to the American porcupine. They can move fast - walking on their tube feet, their spines, or even their teeth! When a sea urchin dies, all its spines fall off, leaving only the test (the outer skeleton).

Torpedo Ray
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Torpedo Ray - the torpedo ray (electric ray) stuns its prey with an electrical charge of up to 80 volts! Rays are surprising animals no matter where they are encountered. Their entire skeleton is made of cartilage, a strong flexible connective tissue. People have cartilage in their outer ears. Ancient Romans believed that a headache, even if it was chronic and unbearable, was

taken away forever by placing a live black torpedo ray on the spot which was in pain, until the pain ceased! Incredible!

Sea Stars

Sea Stars -sometimes referred to as "starfish," most sea stars have five arms, although some species have from four to ten arms. In all species, the arms can be regenerated if lost! They can spit out their stomachs, "see" with their feet, grow back most of their body if damaged, and move around using water pressure!



Sea Anemone
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Club-tipped Anemone- gets its name from the rounded growths on the end of its tentacles. It is also known as the Strawberry anemone. This small 1 inch anemone is translucent and ranges in color from red to pink, orange, purple, and brown. These animals use special stinging cells called nematocysts to catch their prey.