



Explore the seashore with the Marine Conservation Society

# Seashore Safari Guide

**I see seashells on the seashore**

**Do you know your barnacles from your limpets or your hornwrack from your bladderwrack?**

**Can you spot a sanderling, starfish or sea potato without a second glance?**

Well, if you like scouring the shoreline for bits of driftwood and shells or have ever wondered at the natural treasures the tide brings in but aren't sure what everything is, then the MCS Seashore Safari Guide will reveal some of the secrets of the strandline.

The strandline - the top bit of the beach where man-made and natural objects washed up on the waves are left as the tide recedes - is a place of wonder and fascination.

Take the MCS Seashore Safari Guide with you every time you head to the beach and see how many seashore treasures you can find.



© Stuart Askew



© Paul Naylor



© Stuart Askew



© N Fryatt

You can delve deeper into the world of fascinating facts and intriguing information about the creatures of the shore and all the work we do at [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)

## Protecting our seas, shores and wildlife

Our seas and shores are home to amazing wildlife, vital fish stocks, and give enjoyment for everyone. But too many fish are being taken out, too much rubbish is going in and too little has been done to protect our the seas around the UK.

MCS works tirelessly for healthier seas and abundant wildlife – and you can help us achieve our vision of seas fit for life.



### Beachwatch

Regular beach cleans that help us identify where rubbish comes from and how to stop it.



### Sea Champions

A network of active volunteers who champion the seas on behalf of MCS.



### Marine life sighting schemes

If you are lucky enough to see basking sharks, turtles or jellyfish, use our online wildlife sighting surveys to report them to MCS. If you dive, you can take part in underwater Seasearch surveys.



### Good Fish Guide

Contact us for a pocket Good Fish Guide, or download our smartphone app to help you choose sustainable seafood - visit [www.goodfishguide.org](http://www.goodfishguide.org)



### Join us

As a charity we rely on donations and subscriptions to carry out our vital work. By becoming a member you will be supporting the UK's leading marine conservation charity – visit [www.mcsuk.org/join](http://www.mcsuk.org/join) to find out how.

## Seashore Code

Stretching around 16,000km, the coastline around the British Isles is a huge playground for everyone to enjoy. Follow the MCS Seashore Code and enjoy the coast, without harm to yourself or wildlife.

### Explore responsibly

- ★ Leave animals where you find them.
- ★ Carefully lift and replace any rocks you move and leave attached seaweed in place.
- ★ Seashells nurture an interest in nature amongst children, so if you want to take a couple home only take empty open shells (like limpets and mussels) and leave the shells that can 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.

Photos supplied by: Paul Naylor, Jack Sewell/MBA, Fiona Crouch, Richard Harrington/MCS, Ryan Townley/MCS, Jo Jamieson, Sean Clark, Andy Hay/RSPB-Innages, Nola Barker, Andy Pearson, Alan Jones and Stuart Askew.

Seashore illustration: Claire Hammond (clairreham@hotmail.com) [www.claire-hammond.co.uk](http://www.claire-hammond.co.uk)

Produced with generous support from

**M&S** EST. 1884  
 Scottish Natural Heritage  
 Dutchess Natural na-H-Alba  
 Naturhistoriska riksmuseet

☎ 01989 566 017  
 🌐 [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)  
 📘 [facebook.com/mcsuk](https://facebook.com/mcsuk)  
 🐦 [twitter.com/mcsuk](https://twitter.com/mcsuk)  
 📍 Marine Conservation Society  
 Overross House, Ross Park, Ross-on-Wye  
 Herefordshire HR9 7QD

© Marine Conservation Society (MCS) 2016. All rights reserved.  
 Registered Charity No. 1 094005 (England & Wales); SC937480 (Scotland).  
 Registered in England VAT No: 489 1505 17.

# Seashore Safari Guide

Explore the seashore with the Marine Conservation Society



**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.



**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.



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



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



**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.



**COMMON WHELK EGG CASES**   
Puffy balls of white eggcases laid by the commonwhelk. 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.



**PINK SEA FAN SKELETON**   
Although they look like plants, pink sea fans are actually colonies of coral that are made up of animals whose hard skeletons run through the fan.



**MERMAID'S PURSE**   
Egg cases of dogfish, skates and rays, which attach to seaweed with entwining tendrils and often wash up once the animals have hatched.



**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!



**BRITTLESTAR**   
These guys have a small central disk and long slender arms which they can self-amputate if being attacked and then regrow once the wound heals.



**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.



**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.



**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.



**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.



**SANDERLING**   
These birds can be spotted running up and down the shore as each wave comes in. A winter visitor to the UK.



**HERRING GULL**   
These cheeky fellows with the red spot on their beaks are found along most coasts and are easily attracted by a bag of chips!



**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.



**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".



**EDIBLE CRAB**   
This pinkish brown crab has chunky claws and its shell looks like a pastry crust.



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



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



**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.

