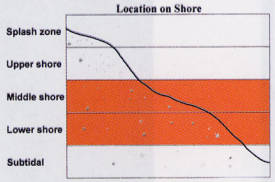
The animals described in this leaflet can all be found on rocky shores. Some like living in rock pools, others under boulders, and some simply spend most of their lives stuck onto rocks.

Divisions on the Shore

The rise and fall of seawater with the tide has a big influence on rocky shore animals. Some prefer to live close to the low water mark where they spend most of their day underwater. Others live in the middle of the shore spending roughly equal amounts of time underwater and in the air. Animals which live on the upper shore are only covered by seawater at high tide. This pattern is called ZONATION. Look at the zonation diagram next to each animal to find out where on the shore you'll be most likely to see it.

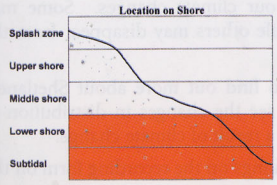
Tortoiseshell Limpet *Tectura testudinalis*

Tortoiseshell limpets can grow up to 3 cm across - noticeably smaller than most other limpets which you see around Shetland. The background colour of the shell can range from white to grey to pale green, and its surface is very smooth compared with other limpets. The feature that gives this limpet its name and makes it stand out from all the others, is the dark brown stripes which run from the tip right down to the edge of the shell. They can be found on boulders or small smooth stones, particularly those with pink crusts growing on them.



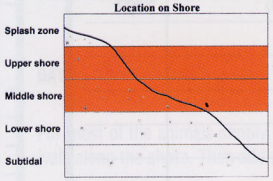
Pearly Topshell *Margarites helicinus*

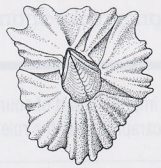
Topshells are a group of small marine snails. The shell of the pearly topshell is only about 3mm tall - smaller than a pea! Its colour varies from an orange-red to cream-brown, patterned with green or purple. Have a look for these topshells under stones or attached to seaweed on the lower shore, as well as in rock pools.



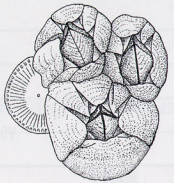
Star Barnacles *Chthamalus stellatus*

Although barnacles look like molluscs (seashells) they are actually more closely related to crabs and lobsters. If you watch barnacles under water - at the edge of a rock pool for example - you will see that they have tiny hairy legs which stick out through the opening in the middle of the shell. They wave their legs about in the water to catch their food.



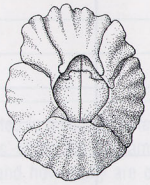


Northern Rock Barnacle

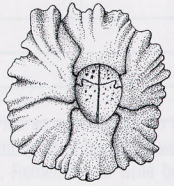


Rock Barnacle

There are many different types of barnacles on the shore. The number of plates that form the protective shell will help you to tell the different types apart. Star barnacles have six roughly equally sized plates. The shape of the opening is also distinctive - star barnacles have oval shaped openings whereas many other types of barnacles have diamond or kite shaped openings. Have a careful look at the pictures below and this should help you to tell the difference between the star barnacles and the others. Star barnacles are found much higher up the shore than all of the other animals in this survey sheet.



Common Acorn Barnacle



Star Barnacle

Snakelocks Anemone *Anemonia viridis*

Snakelocks anemones can have up to 200 long tentacles which are usually green with bright purple tips (see the photo on the front cover). They are called snakelocks because the tentacles can look like a mass of tiny snakes. Unlike many anemones (such as the beadlet anemone, which can often be seen on the shore looking like a blob of red jelly) snakelocks anenomes rarely pull in their tentacles. They can be found attached to stones and rocks on the lower shore and in rock pools.