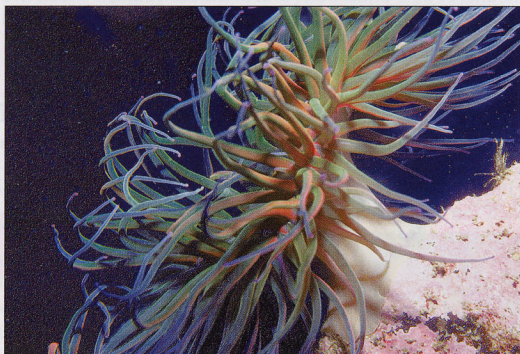


## ROCKY SHORE ANIMALS



Because of its northern location and the warming influence of the Gulf Stream, Shetland is a mixing pot for marine life. Sea temperature is one of the main factors influencing the distribution of marine animals around Shetland. For some that prefer colder, Arctic waters, Shetland is the furthest south that they reach, whilst others from warmer waters reach their northern limit here.

The climate in Shetland is changing and some people feel that this may be accelerated as a result of global warming. This is expected to affect the coastal environment through increasing seawater temperature, rising sea levels and increased storminess. As a result there will be changes in populations of some marine animals around our shores. The animals described in this leaflet are ones whose distributions are expected to alter if our climate changes. Some may become much more common in Shetland, while others may disappear from the islands altogether.

Shetland Biological Records Centre is keen to find out more about Shetland's marine life and whether we are beginning to see the changes in distribution of some rocky shore animals that are expected as a result of climate change.

Please help us to do this by recording your sightings on the recording form on the back of this leaflet and returning it to SBRC.

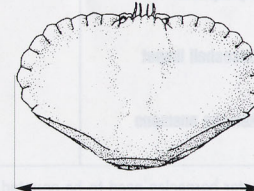
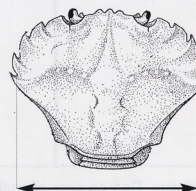
### Shore Crab *Carcinus maenas*



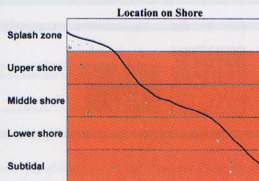
### Edible Crab *Cancer pagurus*



Look carefully at the pictures - can you tell the difference between these two crabs? The one on the left is a shore crab. It has five teeth on each side of its carapace (shell) as well as three bumps between its eyes. The one on the right is an edible crab and the edge of its carapace resembles a pie crust. The shore crab is also a much darker colour, usually dark green, whereas edible crabs are reddish brown.



The bars marked on the pictures above show where to measure the width of the carapace of the two different types of crabs. To work out the size of any edible crabs that you find simply measure the widest part of the carapace. On shore crabs, measure the width of the carapace between the last of the five teeth on each side. When measuring the crabs be careful that they don't nip you. As crabs grow they periodically shed their old carapace and their new carapace takes a while to harden. If you find any soft crabs be careful not to squash them!



Shore crabs can be found on all types of shores, particularly among seaweed. Edible crabs live mainly in holes and crevices between rocks. Adults spend much of their life underwater but young edible crabs can be found under boulders and stones on the lower shore. Don't be surprised if all of the crabs that you find on the shore are fairly small.