

What Lives in the Sea?

There are many creatures that live on the bottom of the sea. The bottom of the sea is called the sea floor.

Near the shore, where the sea and the land meet, you might see crabs, lobsters, starfish, or even sea urchins. Crabs and lobsters have legs they use to crawl along the sea floor. Starfish and sea urchins use funny kinds of little feet.

Many kinds of shells live on the sea floor, too. Have you ever seen a seashell? Was it empty? Did you know that a little sea creature used to live inside that empty shell? These little creatures look like blobs, but they are still real creatures. They live inside the shell as if it were their house.

There are many, many different kinds of seashells. Four different kinds are the clam, the whelk, the scallop, and the limpet. Another shell is called the mouse ear, and another is called the moon shell. How do you think the mouse ear and the moon shell got their names?

Swimming in the water near the shore are many other creatures, such as the squid and the jellyfish. Watch out for jellyfish, because they can sting! If you looked under the sea, you might find an octopus swimming in the water, too, or resting on the sea floor. It likes both places!

Another creature you might find swimming in the water is the sea horse. A sea horse is not really a horse. It is really a fish! A sea horse can rest by holding on to plants with its tail.

Animals that live in the water and on the land can also be seen near the shore. Lots of sea birds come onto the shore to lay their eggs. Penguins, loons, sea gulls, and pelicans are just some of the many, many kinds of birds you might see.

Sea turtles also lay their eggs on the shore, but they spend most of their time in the water. They can swim very far. Some swim hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of miles every year!

A seal is another kind of animal that lives both in the water and up on the shore. If you ever see a seal on shore, it flops up and down in a bumpy kind of way. But in the water, a seal swims very smoothly and very fast!

An animal that looks a little like the seal but is much bigger is the walrus. The walrus has two big tusks it can use to defend itself, if it has to. It can also swim very fast.

Many things live farther out in the sea. You could find very small plant life near the top, where sun light helps these plants grow. These very small plants are called plant plankton.

Plant plankton is so small, you cannot see it just by looking at it, but it is very important. Plant plankton is food for lots of things that live in the sea. One creature that eats plant plankton is the krill. The krill looks like a very small shrimp.

Krill is also food for things that live in the sea. Some of the small fish that like to eat krill are the herring and the anchovy. The herring and the anchovy both swim in big bunches. Do you know what a bunch of fish is called? That's right, a school!

Like the krill, the herring and the anchovy are food for some bigger fish. Do you know the names of any bigger fish? Two kinds of bigger fish are called the bluefish and the yellowtail. How do you think the bluefish and the yellowtail got their names?

Do you know what the biggest creatures in the water are? That's right, whales. The gray whale can grow up to 40 feet long. The blue whale can grow up to almost 100 feet long. It is the biggest animal on Earth, and it may be bigger than the biggest dinosaur ever was!

Whales can do some very wonderful things. Just like you and me, whales breathe air. But whales can hold their breath and dive down very deep. When they come back up, they blow out their breath in a big spout of water.

They also can make sounds under water that can be heard far away. Whales use these sounds to find food, and they also use these sounds to talk to each other. Some whales, such as the humpbacks, can even sing!

You have learned about many things that live in the sea. Can you remember the names of any of them? Can you say their names? Have you ever seen any of them?

Many more creatures live in the sea than are named in this story. Maybe you have heard of other sea creatures. At the back of this book, creatures from this story are listed. If you want to, you can add the names of other things that live in the sea.