

Purple Sea Urchin

Strongylocentrotus purpuratus

The Purple sea urchin's pin cushion appearance comes from its round inner shell called a "test".

The test is covered with pincers, tube feet and purple spines.



Max Size: 2-4 inches

Diet: Mainly detritus and algae

Range: Gulf of Alaska to Cedros Island, Mexico

Habitat: Ocean floors, reefs

Rose Pink Urchin

Toxopneustes roseus

The Pink Urchin is so named for the pink coloration of the test.

Occasionally sand, rock or shells are carried in their spines and used as camouflage from predators.



Max Size: 2-4 inches

Diet: Mainly detritus and algae

Range: Gulf of Alaska to Cedros Island, Mexico

Habitat: Ocean floors, reefs

Chocolate Chip Sea Star

Protoreaster nodosus

The Chocolate Chip Sea Star has dark brown chocolate chip or horn shaped spikes all over the top of their body for protection. These dark protrusions also function to scare away possible predators.



Max Size: 12 inches

Diet: Mainly detritus and algae

Range: Indo-Pacific oceans

Habitat: Ocean floors, reefs

Florida Sea Cucumber

Holothuria floridana

The Sea Cucumber is an animal closely related to the Sea Star

They feed on detritus in the sand using tentacles surrounding their mouth and excrete clean sand.



Max Size: 8 inches

Diet: Mainly detritus and algae

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Ocean floors, reefs

Porkfish

Anisotremus virginicus

This small fish gets its name from the grunting noise it makes by grinding its teeth together.

It is nocturnal and often travels in large schools, occasionally swimming with white grunts.

Juvenile porkfish pick parasites from the skin and scales of other species of fish, and are considered “cleaners”



Max Size: 9-16 inches

Diet: Mollusks, echinoderms, crustaceans, and worms.

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Sea grass beds

Four Eyed Butterflyfish

Chaetopod capistratus

Two namesake false eyespots on either side of the base of the caudal fin help not only to add to this fish's beauty, but to also confuse predators.

They are also well known for their swimming capabilities, maneuvering through coral reefs with ease, even swimming sideways or upside down.



Max Size: 6 inches

Diet: Browser who feeds on anthozoans and crustaceans

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Reefs

Astraea Snail

Astraea tecta

Unlike many bottom dwellers that are dressed in drab colors to better camouflage themselves, these snails have a pyramid-shaped shell with beautiful, olive green to purple coloration. This is often the result of coralline algae growing on the shell but can also be a natural color variation.



Max Size: 4 inches

Diet: Algae

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Reefs, sand and rubble

Coral Banded Shrimp

Stenopus hispidus

Coral Banded shrimp are nocturnal, hiding under ledges and in caves during the day and feeding at night.

They are cleaner shrimp who form a symbiotic relationship with other marine life by offering to clean them of parasites and detritus.



Max Size: 2.4 inches

Diet: Parasites, Detritus

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Reefs

Red Leg Hermit Crab

Paguristes cadenati

Red Leg Hermit Crabs are active creatures that spend their time scavenging for food.

They are named for their bright red legs, which are contrasted by their yellow face.

A hermit crabs shell is not a permanent part of its body. As the crab grows, it must find new, larger shells to inhabit



Max Size: 2.4 inches

Diet: Parasites, Detritus

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Reefs, sand and rubble

Blue Leg Hermit Crab

Clibanarius tricolor

Blue Leg Hermit crabs are active creatures that spend their time scavenging for food.

They are named for their bright blue legs with red banding.

When a hermit crab looks for a new shell to inhabit, they tend to prefer shells that spiral in the same shape and direction as their old shell.



Max Size: 2.4 inches

Diet: Algae, Cyanobacteria, Detritus

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

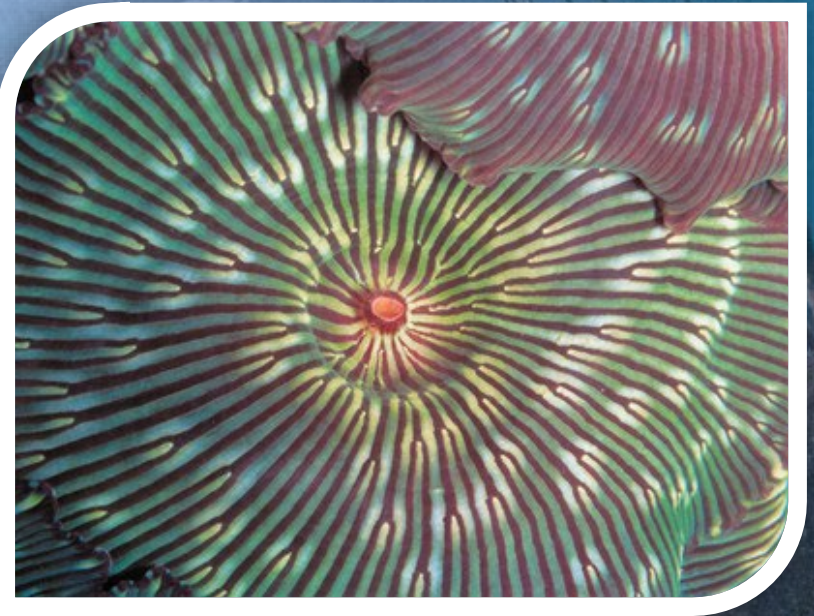
Habitat: Reefs, sand and rubble

Green Stripe Mushroom

Actinodiscus striata

These are not actually mushrooms, but a species of soft coral that resemble a mushroom.

They vary in appearance and can range in color from lighter shades of green to green with lighter shades of blue. They can also have some stripe like features, spots, or a combination of these features on the cap.



Max Size: 2-3 inches

Diet: Micro-particles suspended in the water column

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Reefs

White Nassarius Snail

Nassarius distortus

These snails bury themselves in the sand bed where they sift for food particles.

Their long tube like siphon helps them detect food at the surface of the sand.



Max Size: 0.5-1 inch

Diet: Algae and detritus particle in the sand

Range: Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and the Caribbean

Habitat: Sand beds