Rocky Shore Spotter's Guide - Extra Notes

Dog whelk The dog whelk can be separated from other seashore snails by the distinct groove along the shell lip. This allows water in for breathing during feeding (boring into its prey). Carnivores - eat barnacles, limpets and mussels. Shell colour is variable. Thicker shells for protection on exposed shores. Can you see its eggs too?	Orange sponge Find it under boulders, under seaweed and in damp places like overhangs and crevices. A filter feeder. You may find other sponges too – they vary widely in shape and colour. They are a very old (pre dinosaurs!) successful group of animals. Another group of animals that can appear similar to sponges are the sea squirts.	Flat periwinkle Variable in colour. Brown, green, sometimes bright yellow or orange (this is actually camouflage – hold up a piece of wrack and look through it – underneath it appears yellow). Other winkles on the shore have pointed spires, not flattened ones. Rough winkles (covered in grooved lines) and small winkles are found amongst barnacles. Periwinkles are able to seal themselves into their shell by closing the 'door' – an oval operculum.	Serrated wrack This is found on the lower shore, so the tide needs to be out some way to see it. You may find some red seaweeds there too (in overhangs there is one like a string of sausages). Beyond serrated wracks are the kelps (extreme low tide). Above serrated wracks are other brown seaweeds like bladder wrack and channel wrack.	Keel worm Known as 'toothpaste tube worms'! The underside of rocks/boulders is a good place to find them. Also found on shells. The worm that lives inside is a filter feeder that sticks out its tentacles from the hole to catch its food (plankton mostly and bits floating past).
Shanny If you are lucky you will find one under a boulder, in a rockpool or even in a deep damp crevice (you can sometimes see their beady eyes!). It's a type of blenny. Others are around but they have tentacles on their heads! (e.g. Montagu's Blenny in upper shore rock pools which feeds on barnacle limbs). Can bite!	Laver bread Edible when cooked – not advisable to eat this seaweed on the shore! A flat sheet - brown or purplish red plastered on tops of rocks, usually a lot of it in one place. If there is no Laver bread, can you find another red seaweed?	Prawn Found in rock pools and sand pools (although shrimps tend to be commoner in these). Be gentle! Don't keep them in buckets for too long or they will overheat, plus any crabs and fish in there will eat them!	Hermit crab Its body is soft and shaped to fit inside spiral-shaped shells. You can watch a hermit crab change between shells if you provide a selection of potential homes in a pool, then watch patiently and quietly.	Brittle-star Related to star fish. If you are lucky you may find them in crevices and under stones. As the name suggests they are easily broken! Try to avoid handling. They can grow back their limbs though like all starfish. They have no eyes but can sense chemicals in the water.

Purple topshell There is also a grey topshell that is a bit pointier (and doesn't have the purple stripes). Look for it amongst seaweed and in pools. The mother of pearl inside is common to all topshells.	Chiton It is related to the woodlouse. Found under boulders and in damp places (overhangs, crevices maybe). Like some limpets, these feed on calcareous (hard) seaweeds in rockpools. Chitons are sometimes called Coat-of-Mail Shells as they have 8 interlocking shell plates across their backs.	Coral weed Found in rockpools where it can form 'turfs'. It often fringes the pool and when exposed out of the water it goes white ('bleaches'). The more brightly lit the pool the paler it is. It is a seaweed that has calcareous (chalky) parts to its structure which makes it feel hard.	Sea lettuce Edible (wash first!). There is also a related stringier green seaweed (not commonly edible) which you will find often where there is freshwater entering a site (not that it particularly likes freshwater, but it can survive there whilst other seaweeds cannot).	Beadlet anemone Don't poke it too hard! Check out its bright blue ring just inside the tentacles. These blue bits contain stinging cells to stun their prey (don't worry the skin on our fingers is thick enough so they don't sting us). A similar but less common beadlet anemone found in shaded spots is the strawberry anemone with a spotted column.
Limpet A snail with a homing instinct! It grazes on young seaweed while the tide is in and returns to the same spot, called a home scar, when the tide retreats. Can live up to about 20 years old. See if you can find its feeding trail (made by its scraping 'tongue' as it feeds on the thin seaweed layer on the rocks). Called a Radula, this rasping tongue is the world's strongest biological structure. It has to survive constant scraping without wearing down.	Green leaf worm A fairly common scavenger on rocky shores that feeds on dead or damaged animals such as barnacles and mussels. It typically lives in crevices, under stones, among the holdfasts of large seaweeds and among mussels and barnacles.	Snakelocks anemone Check out the mid to lower shore pools – they are almost always in water. Be brave and feel the sticky tentacles! Green and pink tipped ones are green because they contain tiny plant cells living inside the tentacles. This is a symbiotic relationship. The plants (algae) gain protection, whilst the anemone gains 'energy'. It's internal solar power! Brown variety too but it doesn't have symbiotic algae.	Broad-clawed porcelain crab It can add variety to find a different sort of crab. These are common under boulders (look at the rock surface). Crabs have different sized pincer claws – one is a crusher the other a cutter (kind of like carrying around your own utensils). Can shed a claw or leg to distract an attacking predator and it will grow back!	Shore crab Can't get away from them with kids around! Don't keep them in buckets for too long and don't waste your shore session seeing who can find the biggest/most! In crabs, males have pointy narrow flaps underneath and females wide more rounded ones (bigger to carry eggs). See if you can find both. Use thumb and middle finger to hold each side of the shell to avoid being pinched! If you hold the top and bottom of the shell, the claws can reach your bottom finger.

More than 100 points: you are an official seashore explorer …..yes – get young explorers to do the maths!
More than 140 points: you are a seashore exploring expert!

This guide was developed by **Pembrokeshire Marine SAC**
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All sea life mentioned here is safe to handle unless specified. If you don't know what something is, best not to touch it!

Further info:

- Collins Guide to the Seashore, The FSC Rocky shore name trail.
- MarLIN (The Marine Life Information Network) online.