

Common Marine Invertebrates of Sonoma Coast Sites

Phylum Species	Bodega Head	Doran Rocks	Shell Beach	Bodega Tideflats	Bodega Marinas	Salmon Creek Beach	Comments [former names in brackets]
Porifera (Sponges)							
<i>Haliclona</i>	Common	Common	Common				
<i>Cliona celata</i>	Common	Common	Common				Boring sponge
Cnidaria (Sea Anemones & Relatives)							
<i>Anthopleura elegantissima</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Aggregating Anemone"
<i>Anthopleura xanthogrammica</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Giant Green Anemone"
<i>Anthopleura artemisia</i>		Uncommon	Uncommon				
<i>Epiactis prolifera</i>		Common					"Proliferating Anemone"
<i>Metridium senile</i>					Common		"Plumose Anemone"
<i>Aglaophenia latirostris</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Ostrich-Plume Hydroid"
<i>Obelia</i> spp.		Common			Common		Colonial hydroid
<i>Velevella velevella</i>						Uncommon	"By-the-Wind-Sailor"
<i>Polyorchis montereyensis</i>					Uncommon		Hydromedusa
<i>Aurelia aurita</i>					Common	Uncommon	"Moon Jelly"; polyps on pilings, medusa cast ashore
<i>Pelagia colorata</i>					Uncommon	Uncommon	Jellyfish sometimes cast ashore
Platyhelminthes (Flatworms)							
<i>Notoplana acticola</i>	Common	Common	Common				Under boulders
Trematodes							Example: molluscan parasites
Nemertina (Ribbon Worms)							
<i>Paranemertes peregrina</i>	Common	Common	Common				In mussel beds
<i>Cerebratulus californiensis</i>				Uncommon			In soft sediments
Echiura & Sipunculida (Non-Segmented Worms)							
<i>Urechis caupo</i>				Common			"Fat Innkeeper Worm"; U-shaped burrow
<i>Phascolosoma agassizii</i>				Common			"Peanut Worm"
Annelida: Polychaeta (Marine Segmented Worms) Link to complete lists for the Polychaeta							
<i>Arenicola brasiliensis</i>				Common			"Lugworm"
<i>Glycera americana</i>				Uncommon			"Blood Worm"
<i>Nephtys californiensis</i>				Common			"Shimmy Worm"
<i>Pista pacifica</i>				Uncommon			Tubes end in overhanging hood
<i>Hesperonoe adventor</i>				Uncommon			"Scale Worm"; commensal with <i>Urechis</i>
<i>Chone minuta</i>		Common					
<i>Nereis grubei</i>	Common	Common	Common				In mussel beds
<i>Phragmatopoma californica</i>	Common	Common	Common				Tubes of cemented sand grains
<i>Sabella crassicornis</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				"Plume Worm, Feather-Duster Worm"; sand-encrusted tube
" <i>Spirorbis</i> " spp.	Common	Common	Common				Small, tightly-coiled, calcareous tubes
<i>Serpula "vermicularis"</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				Large calcareous tube

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Arthropoda: Cirripedia (Barnacles)							
<i>Chthamalus dalli</i>	Common	Common	Common				Acorn barnacle
<i>Balanus glandula</i>	Common	Common	Common				Acorn barnacle
<i>Semibalanus cariosus</i>	Common	Common	Common				Acorn barnacle
<i>Pollicipes polymerus</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Goose-neck Barnacle"
Arthropoda: Isopoda & Tanaidacea (Isopods and Tanaids)							
<i>Idotea montereyensis</i>	Common	Common	Common				Most often found clinging on algae or surfgrass
<i>Ligia occidentalis</i>	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common	Rip-rap, high-intertidal zone, splash zone, and above
<i>Leptochelia dubia</i>				Common			
Arthropoda: Amphipoda (Amphipods)							
<i>Megalorchestia californiana</i>						Common	Beach hopper
<i>Caprella californica</i>				Common	Common		"Skeleton Shrimp"
<i>Ampithoe</i>	Common	Common	Common	Common			Among plants
Arthropoda: Caridea (Shrimps)							
<i>Crangon</i>				Common			"Bay Shrimp"
<i>Heptacarpus</i>				Common			"Bent-Back Shrimp"
<i>Hippolyte californiensis</i>				Common			"Grass Shrimp"
Arthropoda: Macrura & Anomura (Ghost Shrimps, Hermit Crabs & Relatives)							
<i>Neotrypaea californiensis</i>				Common			"Bay/Red Ghost Shrimp"; impermanent tunnels; [<i>Callianassa</i>]
<i>Upogebia pugettensis</i>				Uncommon			"Blue Mud Shrimp, Blue Ghost Shrimp"; permanent burrow
<i>Pagurus hirsutiusculus</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Hairy Hermit Crab"; mid-intertidal zone
<i>Pagurus samuelis</i>	Common	Common	Common				Hermit crab; high intertidal zone
<i>Pagurus granosimanus</i>	Common	Common	Common				Hermit crab; low intertidal zone
<i>Petrolisthes cinctipes</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Porcelain Crab"; in mussel beds
<i>Emerita analoga</i>						Common	"Sand Crab, Mole Crab"
Arthropoda: Brachyura (True Crabs)							
<i>Pugettia producta</i>	Common	Common	Common		Common		"Kelp Crab"
<i>Cancer antennarius</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Rock Crab"
<i>Cancer productus</i>				Common			"Red Crab"
<i>Cancer magister</i>				Uncommon			"Dungeness Crab"
<i>Pachygrapsus crassipes</i>	Common	Common	Common	Common			"Lined Shore Crab"
<i>Hemigrapsus oregonensis</i>				Common			"Green Shore Crab"
<i>Hemigrapsus nudus</i>				Uncommon			"Purple Shore Crab"
<i>Carcinus maenus</i>				Common			"Green Crab"; recent invasion in 1993
Arthropoda: Copepoda (Copepods)							
<i>Tigriopus californicus</i>	Common						Splash or very high tidepools

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Arthropoda: Pycnogonida (Sea Spiders)							
<i>Pycnogonum stearnsi</i>		Uncommon					Under rocks or associated with hydroids, anemones, ascidians
Mollusca: Gastropoda: Prosobranchia (Marine Snails)							
<i>Haliotis rufescens</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				"Red Abalone"
<i>Fissurella volcano</i>		Uncommon					"Keyhole Limpet"
<i>Diodora aspera</i>		Uncommon					"Rough Keyhole Limpet"
<i>Lottia digitalis</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Ribbed Limpet"; vertical surfaces; [<i>Collisella</i>]
<i>Maclintockia scabra</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Rough Limpet"; horizontal or gently sloping surfaces; [<i>Collisella</i>]
<i>Collisella pelta</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Shield Limpet"; Common in mussel beds
<i>Collisella limatula</i>				Common	Common		"File Limpet"
<i>Collisella asmi</i>	Uncommon		Uncommon				"Black Limpet"; on <i>Tegula funebris</i> shells
<i>Collisella instabilis</i>			Uncommon				"Unstable Seaweed Limpet"; on stipes of <i>Laminaria</i> or <i>Pterygophora</i>
<i>Scurria insessa</i>	Common	Common					"Seaweed Limpet"; on <i>Egregia menziesii</i> ; [<i>Notoacmea</i>]
<i>Tectura scutum</i>		Common					"Plate Limpet"; [<i>Notoacmea</i>]
<i>Tectura paleacea</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Surfgrass Limpet"; on surfgrass; [<i>Notoacmea</i>]
<i>Acmaea mitra</i>			Uncommon				"White-Cap Limpet"; shell often overgrown with coralline algae
<i>Tegula funebris</i>	Common	Common	Common	Uncommon			"Black Turban Snail"; mid-intertidal zone
<i>Tegula brunnea</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Brown Turban Snail"; low intertidal and subtidal zones
<i>Homalopoma lurida</i>				Uncommon			Common under rocks or shells on mudflats or open coast
<i>Littorina keenae</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Eroded Periwinkle"; splash zone
<i>Littorina plena</i>	Common	Common	Common	Common			Sibling species to <i>L. scutulata</i> ; mid-intertidal zone, rip-rap
<i>Littorina scutulata</i>	Common	Common	Common	Common			"Checked Periwinkle"; mid-intertidal zone, rip-rap
<i>Lacuna marmorata</i>	Common	Common	Common				Mid- to low intertidal zone
<i>Epitoneum tinctum</i>	Common	Common					"Tinted Wentletrap"; among <i>Anthopleura elegantissima</i>
<i>Crepidula adunca</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				"Hooked Slipper Snail"; on <i>Tegula</i>
<i>Euspira lewisii</i>				Common			"Lewis's Moon Snail"; buries in mud or sand; [Polinices]
<i>Nucella emarginata</i>	Common	Common	Common	Common			"Emarginate Dogwinkle"; high and mid-intertidal zone
<i>Nucella canaliculata</i>				Common			"Channeled Dogwinkle"; rip-rap
<i>Nassarius fossatus</i>				Common			"Channeled Nasa"; buries in mud or sand
<i>Astyris carinata</i>	Common	Common		Common			"Carinated Dove Snail"; on surfgrass or hard surfaces on mudflats
<i>Olivella biplicata</i>		Uncommon		Common			"Purple Olive"; buries in sand

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Mollusca: Gastropoda: Opithobranchia & Pulmonata (Sea Slugs)							
<i>Rictaxis punctocaelatus</i>				Uncommon			"Striped Barrel Snail"; buries in sand or mud
<i>Bulla gouldiana</i>				Uncommon			"Cloudy Bubble Snail"; plows through mud or sandy mud
<i>Haminoea vesicula</i>				Uncommon			"White Bubble Snail"
<i>Aplysia californica</i>				Uncommon			"California Brown Sea Hare"
<i>Aplysiopsis smithii</i>				Uncommon			Often on Enteromorpha
<i>Phyllaplysia taylori</i>				Common			"Taylor's Sea Hare"; on eelgrass
<i>Rostanga pulchra</i>	Uncommon	Common					"Red Sponge Nudibranch"
<i>Anisodoris nobilis</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon					"Sea Lemon"; probably feeds on sponges and organic detritus
<i>Diaulula sandiegensis</i>		Common					"Ring-Spotted Dorid"; probably feeds on sponges, maybe tunicates
<i>Hopkinsia rosacea</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon					"Hopkin's Rose"; feeds on bryozoan
<i>Melibe leonina</i>					Uncommon		Sometimes in eelgrass
<i>Coryphella trilineata</i>					Uncommon		"Three-Lined Nudibranch"
<i>Hermisenda crassicornis</i>		Uncommon		Common			Sometimes very common
<i>Aeolidia papillosa</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon			Uncommon		"Shag-Rug Nudibranch"; feeds on sea anemones
<i>Onchidella borealis</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				"Leather Limpet"; often in mussel beds
Mollusca: Bivalvia (Clams & Relatives)							
<i>Mytilus californianus</i>	Common	Common	Common				"California Mussel"
<i>Mytilus trossulus</i>					Common		"Bay Mussel"; <i>M. edulis</i> of earlier literature
<i>Mytilus galloprovincialis</i>					Common		"Bay Mussel"; <i>M. edulis</i> of earlier literature
<i>Pododesmus cepio</i>					Common		"Abalone Jingle"; often attached to breakwaters
<i>Macoma secta</i>				Common			"White Sand Clam"
<i>Macoma nasuta</i>				Common			"Bent-Nosed Clam"
<i>Macoma balthica</i>				Uncommon			"Baltic Macoma"
<i>Venerupis philippinarum</i>				Common			"Manila Clam"; [<i>Tapes japonica</i>]; from Japan
<i>Tresus nuttallii</i>				Common			"Gaper"; calcareous plates on siphon
<i>Saxidomus nuttalli</i>				Common			"Washington Clam"
<i>Clinocardium nuttallii</i>				Common			"Heart Cockle"
<i>Mya arenaria</i>				Uncommon			"Soft-Shelled Clam"; from East Coast
<i>Gemma gemma</i>				Uncommon			"Gem Clam"; from Atlantic coast
<i>Nutricula confusa</i>				Common			Broods young; [<i>Transennella</i>]
<i>Nutricula tantilla</i>				Common			Broods young; [<i>Transennella</i>]
Mollusca: Polyplacophora (Chitons)							
<i>Cryptochiton stelleri</i>			Uncommon				"Gumboot Chiton"; largest chiton in the world to 33 cm long
<i>Mopalia ciliata</i>	Common						In crevices or under rocks
<i>Mopalia lignosa</i>	Common						Often on boulders above a coarse sand bottom
<i>Mopalia muscosa</i>	Common				Common		"Mossy Chiton"
<i>Nuttallina californica</i>	Common						High and mid-intertidal zones
<i>Tonicella lineata</i>	Uncommon		Uncommon				"Lined Chiton"; eats coralline algae, often associated with urchins
<i>Katherina tunicata</i>	Common						"Black Chiton"; high wave energy environments

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Bryozoa & Entoprocta (Moss Animals)							
<i>Membranipora tuberculata</i>		Uncommon	Uncommon				On floating brown algae, sometimes other surfaces
<i>Bugula</i> spp.		Common			Common		Common fouling organism
<i>Schizoporella unicornis</i>	Common	Common	Common		Common		Rocks and shells on open coast; wharf pilings in harbors
<i>Eurystomella bilabiata</i>		Uncommon					On shells and stones
<i>Flustrellidra corniculata</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				On calcareous algae or stipes of brown algae
Phoronida							
<i>Phoronopsis viridis</i>				Common			Often dense sandy tubes, high densities unique to central California
Echinodermata: Asteroidea (Sea Stars)							
<i>Pisaster ochraceus</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Ochre Star"; rocky coast
<i>Pisaster brevispinus</i>				Uncommon			Sandy or muddy bottom, mostly subtidal
<i>Leptasterias hexactis</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Six-Armed Star"; broods eggs
<i>Asterina miniata</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Bat Star"; [<i>Patiria</i>]
<i>Dermasterias imbricata</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon					"Leather Star"
<i>Henricia leviuscula</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				
<i>Solaster stimpsoni</i>			Uncommon				"Sun Star"; very low intertidal zone, mostly subtidal
<i>Pycnopodia helianthoides</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Sunflower Star"; largest, heaviest, most active Pacific coast star
Echinodermata: Ophiuroidea (Brittle Stars)							
<i>Amphipholis squamata</i>	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon				Rocky shores; in algal holdfasts, under rocks
<i>Amphiodia occidentalis</i>				Uncommon			Among roots of eelgrass
Echinodermata: Echinoidea (Sea Urchins)							
<i>Strongylocentrotus purpuratus</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Purple Sea Urchin"
<i>Strongylocentrotus franciscanus</i>	Uncommon						"Red Sea Urchin"; subtidal
<i>Dendraster excentricus</i>						Uncommon	"Sand Dollar"; subtidal
Echinodermata: Holothuroidea (Sea Cucumbers)							
<i>Cucumaria pseudocurata</i>	Common	Common	Common				"Tar Spot"; in mussel beds
<i>Cucumaria miniata</i>			Uncommon				In crevices, very low intertidal zone
<i>Parastichopus californicus</i>			Uncommon				Largest California sea cucumber; mostly subtidal
Urocordata (Tunicates, Sea Squirts)							
<i>Didemnum carinatum</i>		Common			Common		Colonial
<i>Clavelina huntsmani</i>		Uncommon					Colonial clusters
<i>Ascidia ceratodes</i>					Common		Solitary
<i>Botryllus</i>		Common			Common		Colonial
<i>Botrylloides</i>		Common			Common		Colonial
<i>Styela montereyensis</i>		Uncommon					Solitary

Notes: This list includes some of the most frequently encountered and recognizable invertebrates in the areas listed, but it is not meant to be a comprehensive list. There are many additional species that can be found in all of these habitats by any diligent explorer. The list was compiled primarily by Victor Chow as background material for his summer course, "Marine and Coastal Field Ecology."

List date: 22 April 2003