

ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER Touch Tank Quick Facts





• Size



Location

Use this guide as a reference for basic information and interesting facts about the animals in our touch tank.



Diet



Known as a "cleaning shrimp," these animals have a mutualistic relationship with animals that visit their "cleaning station," such as groupers, or grunts.

BANDED CORAL SHRIMP Stenopus hispidus





- Reaches 6.2 cm in length
 - Has 2 pairs of antennae that are longer than the body



- Western Atlantic from North Carolina to northern South America
- Also found in Indo-Pacific



Eats parasites, damaged tissues, and unwanted food particles as it "cleans" cooperative species



These urchins will use their tube feet to cover their bodies with shells and plant debris, which scientists believe provide shade and protection from bright light.

GREEN SEA URCHIN

Lytechinus variegatus





- Reaches a total diameter of 110mm
 - Test can reach a diameter of 85mm



- Throughout Atlantic from North Carolina to Brazil
- Usually found in water less than 50m deep



 Omnivorous but primarily eats sea grasses and algae



The length of the spines of this species varies with habitat. Individuals that live in high-energy areas (lots of water turbulence) have shorter spines than those living in lowenergy areas.

SLATE PENCIL URCHIN

Eucidaris tribuloides





- Reaches a total diameter of 130mm
 - Spines grow slowly- only 23mm a year



- Throughout Atlantic from North Carolina to Brazil
- Usually found in water less than 50m deep



- **Omnivorous**
- Diet includes algae, coral fragments, gastropods, sponges, and sea grass



Sea cucumbers are known for their sedentary lifestyle. Their mouths are surrounded by a ring of retractile feeding tentacles they use to capture food as it passes by.

SEA CUCUMBER *Holothuria spp.*





 Species in this genus come in a range of sizes. One large species in the Keys can reach 30-50 cm



 This genus of sea cucumber is found in coastal waters in tropical and temperate areas



- Suspension feeders
- Diet includes protozoans, nemotodes, copepods, larvae, and microsopic detritus



FLORIDA CROWN CONCH Melongena corona





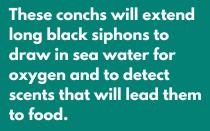
 Can grow to be 200mm but most are much smaller



- Found throughout the Caribbean
- Northern boundary is St. Augustine



- Opportunistic predator and scavenger
- Often feed on bivalves and other gastropods





Despite the name, this conch is a peaceful species that generally leaves other animals alone.

FLORIDA FIGHTING CONCH Strombus alatus



- Generally reaches 65mm to 90mm
- Can reach 130mm



 Found throughout the Caribbean and southern portions of the eastern coast of Florida



Primarily feeds on algae and detritus



LETTERED OLIVEOliva sayana





- up to 65-70mm; largest can grow up to 90mm
- Larger and slimmer than other similar species in the area



- Throughout Caribbean
- Ranges from North Carolina to Brazil

This snail lacks an operculum, or "door" for the opening of its shell. Its name is due to the markings on the shell looking vaguely like letters.



- Primarily feeds on other snails and crustaceans
- May also scavenge for food/detrius



Horseshoe crabs are not crabs at all. They are more closely related to spiders, scorpions, and ticks than to crabs or

lobsters.

HORSESHOE CRAB Limulus polyphemus





- Females are generally one third larger than males
- Females can reach 46-48cm in some parts of their range



- North America along the Atlantic and Gulf Coast
- Found from Mexico to Nova Scotia



- Omnivorous
 - Diet includes clams, crustaceans, worms, and algae



Some sponge species are parasitic, boring into corals, oysters, and other animals. This process does not provide nutrients for the spongejust space for more growth.

SPONGES





- Can grow to large sizes but consist mostly of holes.
 - Have in internal skeleton of needle-like spicules



- Can be found in most marine environments
- Thrive in regions with low turbidity



 Filters plankton, bacteria, and other tiny particles by pumping water through a series of internal chambers and canals



SEA STARS





 Come in a range of sizes but most are between 12cm and 24cm



- Can be found in many marine environments
- Found in salt and brackish water



- Generally carnivorous
- Many species have the ability to pry open clams or oysters and insert stomach into prey

