

CABBAGE TREE BAY MARINE LIFE



1. Blue Spot Butterflyfish
Chaetodon plebeius

Size: Grows up to 12cm long.
Habitat: Coral reef.
The Blue Spot Butterflyfish is a tropical species often carried down in warm currents from the north. The juveniles of this species look quite different from the adults. Often this means that they can invade the territory of the adults without them realising it.



2. Eastern Frogfish
Batrachomoeus dubius

Size: Grow up to 30cm long.
Habitat: Sheltered rocky reef, muddy sand.
This well camouflaged fish lives on the sea floor. When feeding the frogfish can catch its prey within one hundredth of a second, and can expand its mouth so it can fit more in. It is called a frogfish because of the croaking noise it makes when it is caught.



3. Weedy Seadragon
Phyllopteryx taeniolatus

Size: Grows up to 45cm long.
Habitat: Moderately exposed reef.
Weedy Seadragons are endemic to Australian temperate waters and are protected in NSW. They are closely related to seahorses however, instead of carrying the eggs in the pouch, the male seadragon carries them under his tail for two months.



4. Little Penguin
Eudyptula minor

Size: The smallest penguins in the world, growing 30-40cm tall.
Habitat: The Little Penguin needs both land and sea to survive, although most of their time is spent at sea finding food. They return to land to breed, raise their young and to moult. Although birds, Little Penguins can not fly but they do swim. Manly's population of Penguins is listed as endangered.



5. Biscuit Star
Pentagonaster dubeni

Size: Arm length up to 7.5cm
Habitat: Moderately exposed and sheltered reef. This species of sea star has five arms. Underneath each arm there are many tiny tube feet, with suction discs that can grip onto rocks. They also allow the star to catch and eat its prey, which is partially digested before it is pulled inside the sea star's body.



6. Blue-ringed Octopus
Hapalochlaena maculosa

Size: Grows up to 12 cm long.
Habitat: Commonly found in rocky shallow pools or wedged under rocks. While resting, the background colour of this octopus is a uniform grey to beige, with large, light brown patches. If provoked, these patches will change into bright blue rings. The Blue-ringed Octopus has a bite that can be fatal but is not aggressive unless provoked.



7. Soft Corals
Erythropodium hicksoni

Size: Each polyp grows to about 1cm high.
Habitat: Sheltered to moderately exposed reef 2-15m deep.
Soft Corals are formed by small polyps joining together in groups called colonies. The polyps have hollow bodies and can be found spread across boulders or growing upright with many branches. Soft corals feed on plankton.



8. Common Limpet
Cellana tramoserica

Size: Grows up to 5cm
Habitat: Exposed rocky shores; mid to low intertidal areas.
Limpets use the suction pressure from their large foot to grip onto rocks. They move slowly grazing on microscopic algae or larger seaweeds. Some return to their home base, a circular scar on the rocks, after feeding.



9. Grey nurse Shark
Carcharias taurus

Size: Grows up to 3.2 m long.
Habitat: Rocky caves around rocky reef or deep sandy gutters.
The Grey nurse Shark is listed as an endangered species in NSW. They give birth to one pup per year on average. They gather in groups in various locations along the NSW Coast.



10. Jelly Blubber
Catostylus mosaicus

Size: Its bell-shaped body grows up to 35cm wide.
Habitat: Estuaries and open oceans.
The Jelly Blubber is made up of a bell shaped body surrounded by eight arms. Without a mouth to eat, the Jelly Blubber uses small openings in its arms. As water flows past the small arm openings, food passes from the water into the stomach.



11. Sea Pen
Sarcophyllus grandis

Size: Grows up to 4cm long.
Habitat: Sand and silt.
This animal is called a sea pen because it looks like a writing quill. The 'leathers', which branch off from the main stalk, capture food and oxygen from water that flows past them. The sea pen feeds at night. It stands upright by pumping water into its stalk. During the day it shrinks into the sand.



12. Moon Wrasse
Thalassoma lunare

Size: Grows up to 22cm long.
Habitat: Various habitats including rocky reef.
The Moon Wrasse is commonly green in colour with yellow on the tail, and a blue head. The males are usually more blue, with traces of pink on their fins. They are generally found in schools and feed on invertebrates (animals without backbones).



13. Port Jackson Shark
Heterodontus portusjacksoni

Size: Grows up to 1.65m long.
Habitat: Sheltered to moderately exposed reef and seagrass.
Normally harmless, this generally nocturnal shark is characterised by the distinctive 'bars' or stripes on its body. The female lays a spiral egg case, which is commonly found washed up on the shore in summer months.



14. Sea Urchin
Heliocidaris erythrogramma

Size: Spines grow up to 3cm long.
Habitat: Steep reef walls with good current flow.
Underneath this spiny creature is a jaw full of horn-like teeth used to graze on algae and sponges. The sea urchin moves around on its spines and tiny tube feet.



15. Hermit Crab
Pagurus sinuatus

Size: Grows up to 6cm long.
Habitat: Sheltered reef or sand at depths of 0-5m.
Hermit crabs live in snail shells to protect their soft abdomens. As they get too big for their shell they move to a larger one. Natural scavengers, they will eat just about anything, even crabs and other live prey. Typically, their right claw is bigger than the left.



16. Tent Shell
Astrarium tentoriformis

Size: Grow up to 6cm.
Habitat: Rock surfaces 0-5m deep.
Tent Shells are commonly found amongst seaweed attached to rocks. Herbivorous grazers, they use a strip of teeth-like structures to scrape algae off rocks. The base of the shell is almost flat, and they can plug their shell entrances as protection against drying out at low tide and predators.



17. Gloomy Octopus
Octopus tetricus

Size: Grows up to 80 cm long.
Habitat: Reef
The Gloomy Octopus is the largest species of octopus most commonly seen along Sydney's coast. To propel themselves quickly backwards, they expand a muscular sac, by sucking in water and squirting it out through a tube above the head.



18. Common Stingaree
Trygonoptera testacea

Size: Grows up to 47cm long.
Habitat: Sheltered sand and mud.
This is the most abundant stingaree on the coast of NSW. Slightly smaller than the stingray, it has a rounded fin at the end of its tail. The whip like tail also possesses venomous spines.



19. White's Seahorse
Hippocampus whitei

Size: Grows up to 15cm long.
Habitat: Sheltered seagrass and reef.
This seahorse is only found in Australia. The male of the species cares for the eggs, carrying them in a pouch until they hatch. Seahorses protect their bodies with bony plates. They have long snouts, which they use to suck their prey into their stomachs.



20. Eastern Blue Grouper
Achoerodus viridis

Size: Grows up to 1.2m long.
Habitat: Exposed reef, 0-40m deep.
The Blue Grouper can change both colour and sex as it grows. Juveniles are usually female and red-brown in colour. They form a harem dominated by one male. When this male dies a female in the group will change sex within days and assume his role. They have been known to live for 35 years.



21. Bubble Shell
Hydatina physis

Size: Grows to an average of 2.5 - 3cm
Habitat: Estuarine sand flats and coastal shores.
The Hydatina physis is the most striking mollusc of its family. It has a soft body that grows around a fragile shell and a flattened head used for digging. They feed on marine worms and other mollusks.



22. Dusky Flathead
Platycephalus fuscus

Size: This species is the largest of the flatheads, growing up to 1.2m long and up to 15kg in size.
Habitat: A range of habitats from sheltered rocky reef to sandy or muddy areas.
This species is a popular angling fish in NSW. They live on the seabed and usually wait for prey such as fish, crabs, squid or shrimp to pass by.



23. Tube Worm
Serpula vermicularis

Size: The visible part of this tubeworm is only a small part of the animal, which can extend a further 10cm into the limy tube in which it lives.
Habitat: Shallow water on rocky shores.
The Tube Worm's long crowning tentacles extend to capture food and oxygen at high tide when the animal is covered by seawater. This species can be found world-wide.



24. Crimson-banded Wrasse
Notolabrus gymnoensis

Size: Grow up to 40cm long.
Habitat: Rocky, shallow estuaries and reef.
The appearance of this species varies greatly according to age and sex. Juveniles are green to brown with white spots. Females are red, green or grey with rows of white spots. Males have white cheeks, a red band across the body, red fins and a white tail.



25. Southern Squid
Sepioteuthis australis

Size: Grows up to 38cm long.
Habitat: Exposed sand and reef.
The Southern Squid has eight arms and two longer tentacles it uses to catch prey. It can change colour rapidly according to its mood or the environment. When threatened it releases a dark ink, which acts like a decoy while it escapes. Its streamlined body allows it to move rapidly through the water.