

OCEAN PLANET SCAVENGER HUNT

If you haven't been able to take a trip to the seashore this summer, here are some surprising ways for you to explore and learn about our ocean planet at home. In this scavenger hunt, see if you can find any of the items below that are related to sea life right here in the high desert of Northern Nevada!

Roly polies: Have you seen "roly polies", pill bugs, or doodlebugs in your yard? You may be able to find one or two in your garden or under rocks. Pill bugs are **scavengers**. They eat rotting plant matter, but they will also eat animal material. They usually live in moist environments and are **nocturnal**, meaning they are active at night.

Roly polies, or terrestrial crustaceans:



These little bugs are related to creatures found in the sea called **ocean isopods**! They are sometimes called **terrestrial crustaceans** because they are so similar to ocean isopods. They even have gill-like structures to breathe. Although pill bugs have "gills", they cannot survive underwater since their **pleopod gills** are better at removing oxygen from air than water. Approximately half of the known species of isopods live in the ocean. Some are large and live in deep seas; others are very small and live as parasites on fish. Some isopods live in coastal waters, and may live on plants or move about the sea floor.

Deep sea, or ocean isopod:



Algae: Giant Kelp is found in the ocean in Giant Kelp forests. Kelp is a type of algae. Algae are a group of aquatic organisms that are able to conduct **photosynthesis**. You may be surprised that many things in your home contain algae. Algae are frequently added to food or other things as a thickener. Fish oil and some omega-3 supplements also contain algae. Some algae can be eaten alone and is a source of many nutrients.



Kelp, a type of algae:



Look at the ingredients on labels of things in your house. Look for the word “**alginate**.” If it has that word in it; it contains algae! For starters, look at your shampoo, yogurt, ice cream, toothpaste, and salad dressing. Then, keep on searching.

Dogs: Sea lions are sometimes called “dogs of the ocean.” Dogs and sea lions are actually related. Some similar characteristics:

- Both are mammals
- Sea lions and dogs have sharp teeth called canines
- Dogs and sea lions are curious and like to play
- Dogs and sea lions have long snouts and whiskers

Although they may seem similar, sea lions are different than seals. Sea lions have external ear flaps, seals do not. Sea lions are classified in the family called *Otariidae*, meaning eared seals. Sea lions can walk on land using all four flippers, but seals bounce along on their bellies. Seals use their rear flippers to swim, but sea lions use their front flippers.

It will probably be pretty easy for you to find a dog on your Ocean Planet scavenger hunt!

Sea lions and one smiling dog!

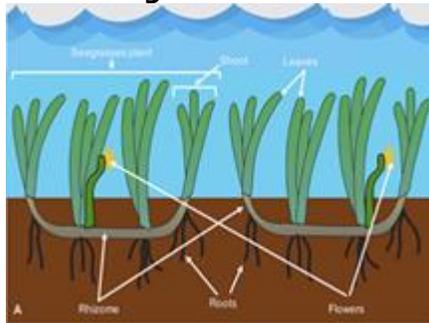


Flowers: Flowers are related to something found in the ocean called **seagrasses**, which are underwater plants. They are like the plants found on land in that they have leaves, flowers, roots, and seeds. They make their food through the process of **photosynthesis**. Many sea creatures make their homes in seagrass. Some examples are seahorses, shrimp, birds, sea turtles, octopuses, and fish. Seagrasses have been called “the lungs of the sea”



since they release oxygen into the water. They also help to stabilize the sea bottom by preventing soil erosion. Seagrass is an important part of the ocean **ecosystem**.

Seagrasses:



Sea creatures that make their homes in seagrasses:



seahorse



shrimp



seagull



sea turtle



octopus



fish

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It's time to see what you have learned! To complete this scavenger hunt, you'll need to find all four items discussed in this activity: roly polies, algae, dogs, and flowers. Read over the descriptions again, if you need to, then get to work locating examples of each one.

As you work through the activity, mark each item off on the checklist below and add a photo, sketch or written description of what you found and where you found it. Good luck, and happy hunting!



Sea lions:

San Diego Zoo Kids, "California Sea Lions" <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos/california-sea-lions>

Animal Planet, "A Day of Seals and Sea Lions, The Aquarium: A Deeper Dive"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbI1_Z9Cs1A

NOAA Fisheries, "B-Roll: California Sea Lions"

<https://videos.fisheries.noaa.gov/detail/videos/b-roll:-seals-and-sea-lions/video/4084857759001/b-roll:-california-sea-lions?autoStart=true>

The Pet Collective, "Dogs of the Sea" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49YmgqJ-Z54>

Seagrass

Hakai Institute, "Seagrass: Life in the Underwater Meadows"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRnFLujT368>

Ocean:

National Geographic, "Why the Ocean Matters"

<https://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/00000144-0a26-d3cb-a96c-7b2f454b0000>

Materials available from the Washoe County Library System

Bug Science: 20 Projects and Experiments about Arthropods: Insects, Arachnids, Algae, Worms, and Other Small Creatures by Karen Romano Young

The Golden Forest: Exploring a Coastal California Ecosystem by Carol Blanchette and Jenifer Dugan

Oceans by Samantha Gray

The Blue Planet: Seas of Life, a BBC/Discovery Channel co-production (Blu-ray video)

Blue Planet II, BBC (Blu-ray video)

W is for Waves: an Ocean Alphabet by Marie and Roland Smith

Ocean Counting by Janet Lawler

Make a Splash! A Kid's Guide to Protecting Our Oceans, Lakes, Rivers & Wetlands by Cathryn Berger Kaye

