

Mollusca (Snails, Slugs, Clams, Mussels, Chitons and Octopuses)

A defining characteristic of the mollusk is its single foot. One large walking foot distinguishes all gastropods, the class encompassing snails (including limpets and abalones) and slugs (nudibranchs). The foot of a spiral-shelled snail protrudes from an opening that can be closed with an operculum (a cellophane-like shield mounted on the back of its foot) when its body retracts. Scientists believe that some snails live more than a hundred years. Fragile, short-lived nudibranchs (including dorids and aeolids) do not have shells at all. Their gills are exposed in rows on their backs, or in retractable, feathery rings around their anuses. Look for nudibranchs near sponges in the urchin and surfgrass pools. Bivalves (clams, mussels and scallops) each have two shells encasing their bodies. When buried, a clam holds only its siphon (tubular nose) above the sediments to breathe and feed. The clam's foot is usually hidden within its shell, but some use theirs for digging or propulsion. Each species of flat, oval-shaped chiton has eight plates on its back. Chitons live on rocks, where they graze on algae, some excavating shallow "burrows" with their radula (rough tongue). Octopuses are highly intelligent invertebrates with the capacity to change skin color and texture for camouflage and defense, and to show mood. The foot of an octopus is divided into eight tentacles with a sharp beak at the center. **Note:** Snails are measured by the length of their shells.



black abalone
Haliotis cracherdorii
20cm. Crevices on unprotected coast. 1-3



red abalone
Haliotis rufescens
29cm. Channels, rock fields, under ledges. 3



rough keyhole limpet
Diodora aspera
6cm. Round "keyhole" serves as water vent and waste chute. Rock fields. 3



volcano keyhole limpet
Fissurella volcano
3.5cm. "Keyhole" is oval. Gray to pink. Protected spots. 2 Crescent City, south.



dunce cap limpet
Acmaea mitra
5cm long, 3cm high. Symmetrical, white but often covered by encrusting coralline algae. Exposed rocks, pools. 3



ribbed limpet
Lottia digitalis
2cm. Pronounced "half-dome" shape. Exposed rocks. S, 1



file limpet
Lottia limatula
3cm. Has many fine, radiating ribs. Apex (tip of shell) not centered. Exposed rocks. 2, 3



shield limpet
Lottia pelta
4cm. Symmetrical, broad, with high apex. Protected sides of exposed rocks. 2, 3



rough limpet
Lottia scabra
2.5cm. Edges distinctly scalloped. Exposed rocks. S, 1



owl limpet
Lottia gigantea
10cm. Exposed rocks. 2



plate limpet
Tectura scutum
6cm. Very flat. Protected rocks. 2



masked limpet
Tectura persona
4cm. Tall, domed shell. Crevices, rock fields. 1



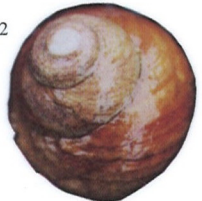
horned slipper snail
Crepidula adunca
1.2cm. Black to tan. Stacked on larger shells. 1, 2



blue top snail
Calliostoma ligatum
2.5cm. Usually on kelp, pools. 3



black turban snail
Tegula funebris
3cm. Characteristic of protected coasts. 2, 3



brown turban snail
Tegula brunnea
3cm. Abundant. 3



little Margarite
Margarites pupillus
1.2cm. Pools, rock fields, surfgrass flats. 2, 3



miniature turban snail
Homalopoma luridum
1cm. Pools, rock fields. 2, 3



boreal wentletrap
Opalia borealis
1.5cm. On anemones. 3



checked periwinkle
Littorina plena
1.3cm. Abundant. S, 1



eroded periwinkle
Littorina keenae
1.8cm. Abundant. S, 1



scaled worm snail
Serpulorbis squamigerus
13cm. Tube-like shells are straight or twisted, found alone or clustered, attached to protected rocks. 3



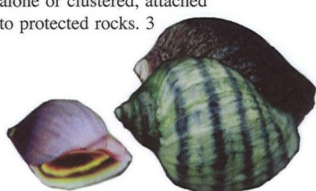
angular unicorn
Acanthinucella spirata
4cm. A carnivorous, intertidal, hoofless unicorn with its horn on the lip of its shell. 1, 2 Tomales Bay, south.



spotted unicorn
Acanthinucella punctulata
3cm. 1, 2 Monterey, south.



leafy hornmouth
Ceratostoma foliatum
8cm. Usually tan or greenish, but color varies. Protected coast. 3



emarginate dogwinkle
Nucella emarginata
2.5cm. Black to green, often striped. Young are orange. Among barnacles, mussel beds. 1, 2



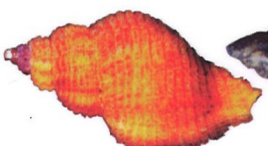
channeled dogwinkle
Nucella canaliculata
4cm. Mussel beds. 2



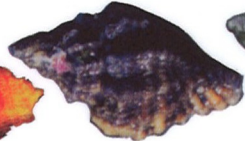
frisled dogwinkle
Nucella lamellosa
5cm. Varied shape and color, but distinguishable as the longest snail clustered below mussel beds. Notice also the grape-like eggs in summer. 3 Pt. Reyes, north.



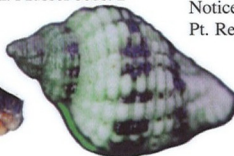
dire whelk
Libabuccinum dirum
4cm. Protected shale reefs. 2 Monterey, north.



lurid rock snail
Ocenebrina lurida
3cm. Black to bright orange. Rock fields. 3



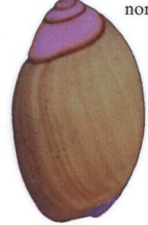
sculptured rock snail
Ocenebrina interfossa
2cm. Rock fields. 3



circled rock snail
Ocenebra circumtexta
2cm. Green to white, encircled with rounded lumps. Rock fields. 3 Trinidad, south.



Joseph's coat amphissa
Amphissa versicolor
1.5cm. Varied. Pools. 3



purple olive snail
Olivella biplicata
3cm. Also brown or white. Protected places with sand. 3