EMERALD KEEPERS

For an Emerald Green, Ocean Blue Coronado


Mussels and barnacles


Bryozoan on sea grass


Anemones


Chiton

LIFE IN CORONADO'S TIDE POOLS

The rocks in front of the Hotel del Coronado are a great place to explore tide pools. With the lowest tides of the year, winter is the ideal time for visiting. Tread carefully and look, but don't touch, as you peer into the exposed underwater world.

Below are a few of the many species you might find:


Rock crab


Sea star

ANEMONES

Resembling 3- to 5-inch flowers, anemones have petal-like tentacles that circle their mouth. Their light green color comes from the symbiotic algae that lives in them. Expect to find anemones submerged in calm pools of water. When out of the water they close, revealing a dark tissue covered with shell bits. This tissue protects the anemone from desiccation, or drying out.

BARNACLES

Barnacles are a type of crustacean characterized by a hard shell attached to a substrate. You might find them on rocks, the undersides of boats, or even whales. They feed using a feathery appendage called cirri, which filters microscopic organisms out of the water. When exposed to air, barnacles close their shells to protect from danger and desiccation. In our tide pools, you will likely find acorn and goose-neck barnacles. Goose-necks have distinctive white protective plates attached to the substrate by a dark fleshy stalk called the peduncle. When you see one, you will understand the name.

BRYOZOAN

Bryozoan are small, sedentary aquatic invertebrates, meaning they do not move. They live in colonies. Each opening in what looks like a lattice-like structure is a single animal called a zooid. These individuals serve different functions in the larger colony, working together to stay alive.

CHITON

Identified by their oval, flat shape and eight overlapping plates, chitons are a type of mollusk. They move along and cling to rocks and feed by scraping algae from the rocks.

CRABS

The green or red shore crabs have a small, square body jointed legs and upturned spikes at the edge of their shells. They quickly move sideways and hide in crevices to avoid predators but will battle when threatened. Rock crabs are identified by their broad carapaces or outer shells and claws. They can grow to eight inches in width. They range in color from brick red and dark brown with red spots to light brown and pale yellow with no spots.

MUSSELS

The California mussel is one of the more plentiful creatures in our tidepools. It attaches to rocks and other mussels by fibers called byssal threads. Mussels have elongated, tightly closed black shells. A mussel filters about 2 to 3 liters of water an hour.

SEA STAR

Local sea stars are found in shades of orange, brown and rose, and have five arms. Sea stars do not have eyes. Instead, they see using eyespots under the skin in each of their arms. They move with tiny tube feet that can be harmed if they are removed from the rocks. The local sea star population declined dramatically in recent years due to warming sea temperatures.

The creatures in our tide pools need your protection. Pick up trash on the beach. Speak up if you see anyone picking up or removing rocks, shells, or animals. This harms the delicate tide-pool ecosystem.

Keep Coronado Emerald Green, Ocean Blue.

For more information visit these websites:

- nps.gov/cabr/learn/intertidal-field-guide.htm
- dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/291/docs/Southern_California_Tidepool_Organisms_ID_sheet.pdf

For more information visit EMERALDKEEPERS.ORG

Photo by Brian Lippe