



Life in the North Sea transcript

Today we will understand the term marine biology, identify and name creatures that live in the North Sea, identify and describe characteristics that can be used to classify marine animals, sort creatures based on common characteristics.

What is Marine Biology? It is the study of the animals that live in the sea.

What jobs does a Marine Biologist do?

- Ichthyologist – are fish fanatics who learn all about the numerous fish we find in the North Sea
- Fishery biologist – is a salty sea dog, who studies fish but also where they live.
- Marine mammologist – are professional whale watchers. They study animals including whales, dolphins and seals.
- Plankton scientist – are microscope mad and study the animals that are at the very bottom of marine food chains.
- Conservation scientist – environmental enthusiasts and focus on protecting the areas where animals and plants live.
- Marine educator – who are rock pooling experts and teach children and adults about the amazing marine life we have in the North Sea.
- Surveyor – who are seashore scientists, trying to find out where animals and plants live or move to.

Where in the world can you be a Marine Biologist?

The sea covers more than 70% of the surface of our planet. So there is a lot of it to learn about and try to protect. The United Kingdom where we live is an island, and is surrounded by sea so there are plenty of places that need marine biologists. And even here in Yorkshire, we have a fantastic coastline that is home to a whole host of weird and wonderful marine wildlife that needs to be protected.

This is an anemone which is what nemo lives in 'finding nemo'. They have stinging tentacles that trap food passing by. They can often be very brightly coloured.

This is a jellyfish which has extremely long thin tentacles that can sometimes give you a sting. Like the anemone they also use these to capture food and also can come in a variety of shapes and colours.

These are corals, commonly known as dead man's fingers. They get their name as they branch out as they grow, making them look like fingers on a hand. You may think they are plants but they are actually hundreds of small animals that share a jelly like skeleton.

This a cuttlefish. They have a fleshy body, 8 arms and 2 tentacles. They eat a variety of small animals like crabs, shrimps and sometimes, other cuttlefish! However they can also be eaten by animals like dolphins, fish and seals.

These are called blue rayed limpets and are found on a type of seaweed called kelp. The limpets will feed on the kelp itself, creating a little pit as they munch away. They have a hard shell and a muscular foot that helps them to stay attached.

Sea slugs come in a variety of shapes, colours and sizes and don't have a shell. They have soft bodies with two pairs of tentacles on their head which they use mostly to smell.

Shrimp have a hard exoskeleton, jointed legs and a segmented body. Shrimp play an important role in marine food chains and are an important food source for larger animals like fish and even whales.

We find a variety of starfish off the Yorkshire coast. They have no head and most have 5 arms. They have a system of tube feet on the bottom of these arms that they used to move, feed and breathe with.

This is a sea urchin. They are round and spiny and like the starfish, also have tube feet that allows them to move. They are eaten by a variety of animals including starfish, fish and in some parts of the world, by humans.

These are called lightbulb sea squirts. They get their name as they really do look a lot like a lightbulb. Again these are made of groups of animals all living together. Sea squirts start off as a tadpole like creature swimming around in the sea. Once they find somewhere to settle and live, they actually digest their own brain, tail and spine!

This is a fish called a butterfish, and they are called that because they are so slippery. They have distinctive black spots on their backs that look a lot like eyes to warn off predators. They have eyes, a mouth, a backbone and breathe underwater using gills.

Flatfish are a type of fish that often difficult to spot and can camouflage well. Both of their eyes lie on one side of their head. They also have a backbone and breathe underwater using gills.

This is called a thornback ray and is also a type of fish. However, unlike the ones we have just mentioned, it has something called cartilage instead of bone. They are often found on the bottom of seabeds, feeding on animals like crabs and shrimp.

Did you know that we do get sharks in the North Sea? This is a smallspotted catshark which is a small shark that is named because of the dark spots covering its skin. Like the ray, it also has cartilage instead of bone with a slender body and a blunt head. They feed on animals like crabs and even other fish.

This is called a basking shark and is the second largest shark in the world. We don't get many visiting our coastline but every year there will be a couple spotted. Unlike other sharks, they only feed on plankton which are tiny little animals floating in the ocean. This gentle giant has an adapted mouth that lets it take large gulps of water, with bristles that are used to catch the plankton.

This is a curious seal. Unlike the animals we have already talked about, seals are mammals like humans. This is because they have fur and produce milk for feeding their young. They will feed on fish in the water but then return to land to rest.

We also get whales visiting us in Yorkshire! This is a minke whale which is the UK's smallest whale. Their bad breath has also given them the nickname 'stinky minke'. Whales have lungs, breathe air and give milk to their young, just like us which also makes them mammals.