

Solitary Islands Marine Park

FACTS

Rocky

Shore

Environments



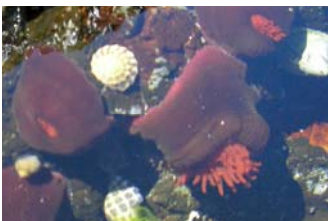
Woolgoolga rocky shore.

Rocky shores make up approximately 26% of the intertidal zone within the Solitary Islands Marine Park. There are several different forms of rocky shore. Some are smooth flat platforms and others, more common in the Solitary Island Marine Park, are very jagged with many rock pools and crevices.

Life can be challenging for the creatures that live on the rocky shore. Organisms must cope with pounding waves, the harsh sun, and tide, wind, salt and temperature fluctuations. Rocky shore plants and animals have adapted many ways of coping with these fluctuations.

There are several different habitat types on the rocky shore, and these can be broken into zones; the lower littoral zone, the mid littoral zone and the upper littoral zone. In some areas, these zones can be distinctly identified by the animals that live there. For example, the white tube worm *Galeolaria* dominates the mid littoral zone as it needs access to the water yet has the ability to lock water into the tube by closing its operculum (or door) so that it can survive the low tide.

The most common types of animals that can be spotted on the rocky shores in the Solitary Islands Marine Park are;



The Red Waratah Anemone is often found in crevices in or near rock pools. When the tide is high the anemone extends its tentacles to catch small pieces of plankton that drift by. At low tide the anemone withdraws its tentacles to conserve water and prevent itself from drying out.

Solitary Islands Marine Park

FACTS

The blue grey periwinkle is especially adapted to the harsh conditions as it has an operculum (door) that keeps the water locked inside its shell when the tide is low to prevent it from drying out.



Pyura or sea squirts are common in the lower zone as they can not live long without access to the water. These animals are filter feeders and play an important role in cleaning the oceans waters.

Seastars are common around rocks and in rock pools. They are quite colourful, have many tube feet to help them cling to the rocks and move around. Seastars eat a combination of algae and small animals.



There are also some animals on the rocky shore that should not be touched, as they are quite dangerous such as the cone shell and blue ringed octopus. It is important to know what they look like and AVOID them!!

Many visitors explore the rocky shores in the Marine Park by snorkelling over them or rambling over the rocks, exploring the rock pools. Rocky shores are also popular with recreational fishers and collectors.



Some rocky shores are fully protected in sanctuary zones to protect plant and animals from harm. However, the majority are within Habitat Protection Zones that generally allow for a range of activities.

As so many people visit the rocky shores in the Marine Park there is bound to be some human impact on the plants and animals. Here are some tips to use when visiting rocky shores that will help to keep them the healthy and interesting areas they are for a long time to come;

- < Leave the animals/shells in their homes rather than take them to yours,
- < Take your rubbish with you when you leave,
- < Return overturned rocks to their original positions,
- < Try to retrieve fishing line and other rubbish off snags,

Remember, take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints!