

Some sponges can reconstitute themselves even after being put through a sieve!

Many sea slugs feed on sea anemones that contain stinging cells and are able to stop them from stinging during digestion. They are then passed to special storage sacs on the back of the sea slug to form a defensive mechanism against predators.

Limestone is made from the fossilised shells of immense numbers of marine invertebrates.

Bryozoans are amazingly diverse - over 15,000 fossil species and 5700 living ones are known. Of the living species, 960 (320 still awaiting formal description) occur in the New Zealand region—seven freshwater and the rest marine, the highest regional “bryodiversity” in the world!

Despite their often enormous size, jellyfish have no head, no skeleton, and no special organs for respiration or excretion.

The term “conchology” is also used for the study of molluscs; however, it is usually applied to those that study the shell only.

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Invertebrates



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The heaviest giant squid ever recorded was captured in 1878. One of the "arms", probably a tentacle, measured 10.6 metres long. It is estimated that the animal weighed in the neighbourhood of 1800kg.

The largest jellyfish is found in the North Atlantic. Specimens have been measured up to 2.3 metres across the bell with a tentacle of 36 metres.

The barrel sponge, found in tropical coastal waters is the largest sponge. Some individuals in the Caribbean measure 6-8 feet tall, and 6-8 feet across.

The largest sea urchin, *Sperosoma giganteum*, had a test diameter of 38 cm.

Sea cucumbers of the genus *Stichopus* have been measured up to 1.3 meters in length and 20 cm in diameter.

When feeding starfish push their stomach out of their mouth to cover the prey, then digest it outside of the body, before pulling their stomach back inside.

The meat of the sea urchin (called a kina in New Zealand) is actually the sexual organs, containing the sperm and eggs.

The world's deadliest creature is the Fleckers sea wasp of Australia. A species of jellyfish with a 'bell' as big as a basketball and tentacles up to 5 metres long that contain almost 40 million stinging cells. They have been known to kill a person in just 30 seconds.

Scientists have determined that some jellyfish have eyes that can detect light from dark and even some movement of objects in their field of vision. It doesn't seem possible that any living creature could have eyes, but NO BRAIN!

Sea cucumbers can eject their entire set of internal organs and then grow new ones to replace them.

Unlike most starfish, which are predators, cushion-starfish are scavengers and eat anything that they can find.

Octopuses have three hearts and blue blood.

On New Zealand shores there is a water spider that lives inside an air-tight silk bubble.

A squids brain is shaped like a doughnut, with the throat going right through the centre.

The longest giant squid was found washed up in Lyall Bay, Cook Strait, in 1887. It measured 17.3 metres long.

The largest species of limpet in the world has a shell the size of a dinner plate and lives around New Zealand's Kermadec Islands.

Limpets have a homing instinct and always return to the same spot on the rocks. Over years they may even wear themselves a hole in the rock!

A person who studies squid is called a teuthologist.

When some starfish are torn in two each half can develop into a new individual.

The baby pearlfish can enter through the anus of the sea cucumber where it feeds on the internal organs, which are continually regenerated.

A deep sea, armour plated snail, as yet unnamed, is the only species known to use iron minerals in self defence.

Anemones and corals belong to a class of animals called *Anthozoa* – Greek for "flower animals".