

Intertidal Zone



Long Island Sound's intertidal zone is shoreline that is alternately submerged and exposed by the tides. These habitats can be rocky, muddy, sandy, or marshy. Plants and animals in this environment can tolerate living both in and out of water, getting warmed by the sun and being pounded by waves.

If you explore the intertidal zone at low tide, many of the animals you will find have a protective shell, like snails and mussels, or an exoskeleton, like crabs and sea stars. Although most of these animals also live in deeper water, their armor helps them to tolerate the changing conditions of the intertidal zone.

If the intertidal zone is a tough habitat, why do so many animals live there? For the food, shelter and oxygen. These nutrient-rich habitats are full of tiny plants and animals. During high tide, small crabs and sea stars can hide under rocks for protection.



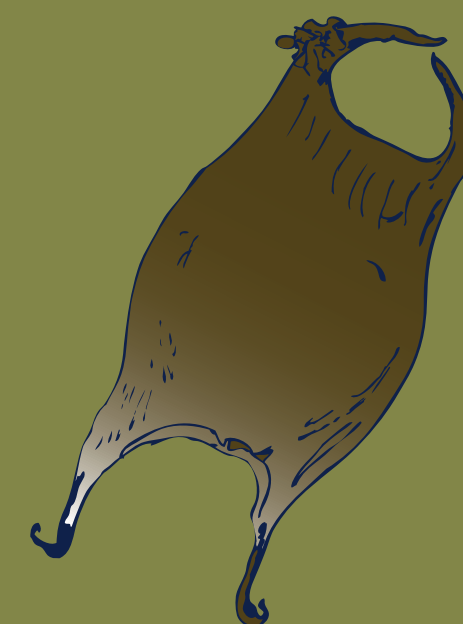
Blue mussel
Mytilus edulis



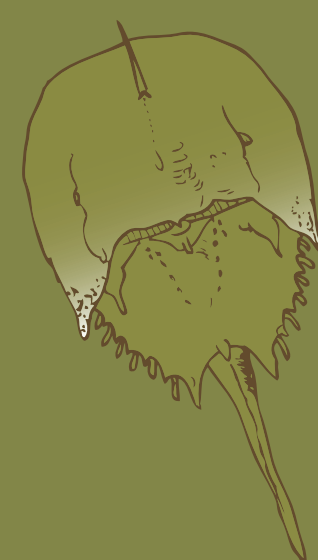
Spider crab
Libinia emarginata



Northern Moon Snail
Lunatia heros



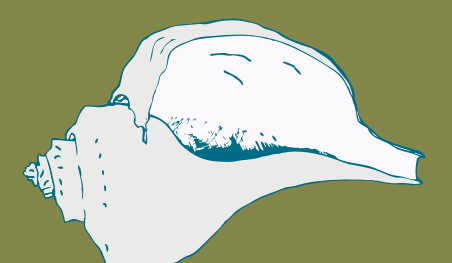
Skate Egg Case



Horseshoe Crab
Limulus polyphemus



Jonah Crab
Cancer borealis



Channeled Whelk
Busycon canaliculatum