

Splash Zone

As the tide changes, so do tide pools. Some flood. Others dry out. It all depends on how close they are to the sea. Think of the shore split into parts, or zones. The one farthest from the sea is the splash zone.

During high tide here, sea spray rains on the rocks. Only a few kinds of animals live in this zone. One of these is the buckshot barnacle.

The barnacles cling to the rocks in clusters. They rarely move. At high tide, the barnacles stretch out their feathery legs. The legs grab tiny creatures in the water called **plankton**. Barnacles eat plankton. The barnacles gobble their catch until the tide changes.

High Zone

The next zone is the high zone. Waves strike this zone during high tide. Most of the animals here have hard, flat shells. These shells protect them from rough waves. One of these animals is the chiton.

The chiton is a small **mollusk**. It looks like it's wearing armor. Chitons crawl over rocks, eating **algae**.

Limpets live here, too. Limpets need to keep moist. During low tide this zone dries up. So some limpets dig holes in the rocks. They press their bodies into these holes. Their shells form a seal. This keeps their bodies moist until the tide returns. The hole isn't totally safe, though. Hungry crabs try to pry limpets free.

This crab scuttles along a tide pool edge.



In the Zone

The changing of the tide helps create four tidal zones. Many plants and animals make these areas their homes.

Splash Zone
Hit by ocean spray

High Zone
Covered during high tides

Mid Zone
Usually underwater, except
when the tide is low

Low Zone
Mostly underwater and
teeming with life



Mid Zone

Lower on the shore is the mid zone. Part of the time, this zone is dry. The rest of the time, it's underwater.

Many plants and animals live here. They must be able to survive when it is wet and when it is dry.

Here clumps of seaweed sway toward the sea. A hermit crab crawls along the water's edge. A sea star oozes over a clump of mussels.



A red octopus hunts for prey in the low zone.

Low Zone

The low zone lies closest to the ocean. It is often underwater. Many creatures live here, even fish.

The low zone is full of activity. Baby perch, a kind of fish, live here. If the pool dries up, they don't die. They can breathe air! When the babies are old enough, they swim out to sea.

Sea palms sway in the current. Sea urchins eat these brown algae. Octopuses eat the urchins.

The tide pool is a home for both the octopus and the sea urchin. Tide pools are home to many other animals, too. Some animals and plants can live in all four zones. Others can't.

Each tide pool has its own story. Each tide pool is full of both life and death. Each day brings many challenges to all that live there.

Wordwise

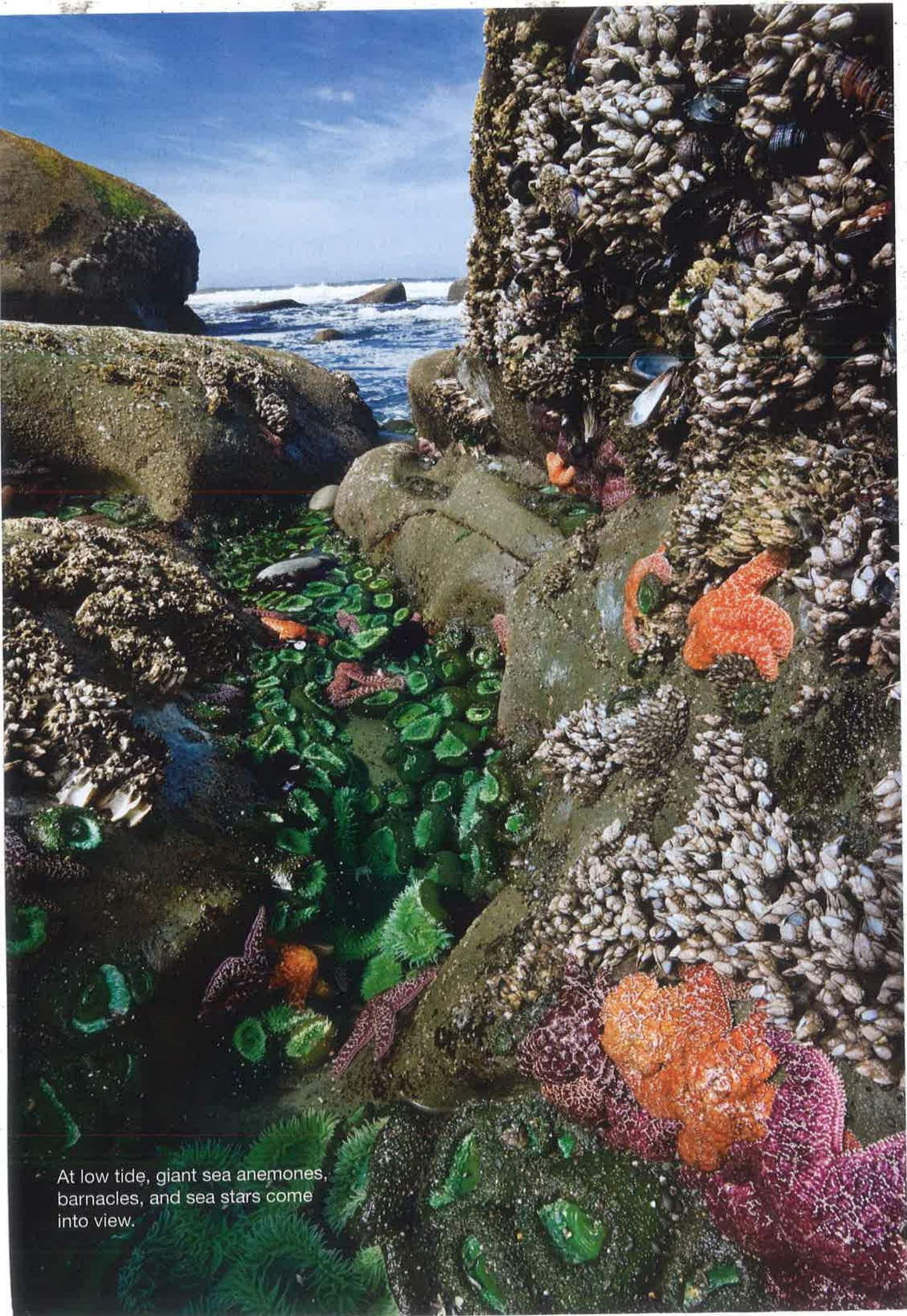
algae: plant-like organisms

mollusk: a soft-bodied animal, such as a snail, that often has a shell

plankton: tiny, floating sea creatures or plants

tide: the twice-a-day slow rise and fall of sea levels

tide pool: a pool of ocean water remaining after a tide has retreated



At low tide, giant sea anemones, barnacles, and sea stars come into view.

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