

Coastal Rockpools

What are rockpools?

Rockpools are found in the intertidal zone, where land and sea meet. These pools form when seawater is trapped in rocky areas during low tide. Rockpools are considered extreme environments because conditions change frequently. Organisms living in rockpools experience fluctuations in temperature, salinity, and water levels. Exposure to sunlight can increase water temperature and cause drying, while wave action can dislodge organisms. To survive, organisms must be adapted to withstand these changing conditions.

Why some animals love living in rockpools

There are many advantages for some marine life to choose to live in a rockpool:

- Abundant sunlight supports the growth of algae, which forms the base of the food chain
- Wave action supplies oxygen and nutrients, supporting marine life
- A variety of surfaces and hiding spaces provide protection from predators
- Organisms must compete for limited space and resources

Why rockpools are considered extreme habitats

Rockpools are considered extreme habitats due to their exposure to the sun. While this exposure can help grow algae, it can also dry up moisture and increase the water temperature.

There is a lot of competition for space amongst the animals that live within a rockpool. As the tide rises and falls, the level of salt in the water (what we call salinity) constantly changes, so the animals within this zone need to be well adapted to these extreme levels.

Numerous waves in this zone can pose a risk to animals being washed away. However, most of the animals within this zone will have great ability to stick to the rock walls of their habitat.

How we can PROTECT these environments

Some tips to share with your friends or family to protect this environment! Can you think of any more?

1. Take your rubbish with you when you leave the beach
2. Return overturned rocks carefully to their original positions
3. Remove fishing line and litter where it is safe to do so
4. Tread carefully to avoid damaging organisms and habitats
5. Observe only – leave animals in their natural environment