

Can you find a clam?

There are over **12,000** species of Clam worldwide.

Giant Clams can grow to 1.80m & live over **100 years** (sadly they don't live on Mersea!)



We live buried in the sand or mud on the seabed

A cockle is a type of clam. Can you find one?

Cockles eat **plankton**. They have a single foot so we can jump along the seabed



We make a heart shape side on.

Count my growth rings to find out how old I am

Mersea oysters have been harvested since **Roman** times

Can you find an oyster?

There are two types here.

Pacific



Native



Most of the shells here are the Pacific. Their shells are thick and have deep ridges.



Can you find a periwinkle?

Periwinkles are **herbivores**. They scrape algae with a sort of tongue that has thousands of tiny teeth on the surface.

They can't swim but can breathe underwater.

If you find something that looks like a ball of bubble wrap it may be a whelk egg case...



Baby whelks are **cannibals!!!**
The first whelks to hatch eat their brothers and sisters to survive!!



Can you find a whelk?

Some are only a few cm long, some (like the common whelk) can be 10cm long.

ATTACK!!! Dog whelks drill through the shell of their victim to get to the soft body inside which they turn to goo and suck up. You might find a shell with a small hole in that may be a Dog whelk victim.

If the shell is green or brownish it is probably a **Shore Crab**.



Can you find a crab shell?

They are **nocturnal** predators, hunting small crustaceans, molluscs, worms and some fish. They love a bit of bacon on the end of a line too!



Can you find a mussel?

Mussels have been a human food source for **20,000** years.

Their main enemy is the Dog Whelk.

They live on rocks or surfaces fixing themselves with **byssal threads** or 'beards'