

Freaky Features

in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary



Turn the card over to see what it is!

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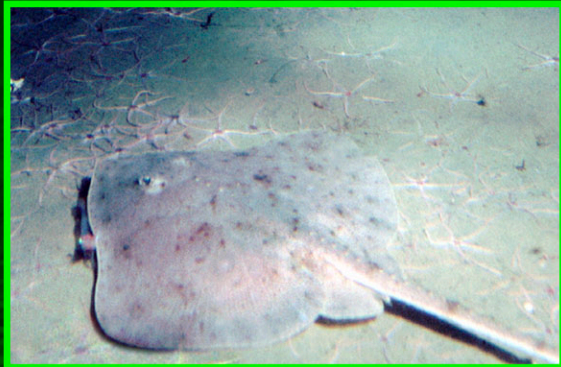
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Sea Anemone

Anemones, like their jellyfish relatives, are animals that eat by stinging and paralyzing prey that gets tangled in their tentacles. Once caught, the small crabs, sea urchins, snails or small fish are brought to the central mouth and down into the body cavity, which works as a huge stomach. Worldwide there are hundreds of kinds of anemones in different colors, from red and cream to green and white.

Hydroids

This strange looking creature is actually a colony of animals living together. The large, feather-like plumes consist of a central stalk with numerous branches. Plumes can get up to 5 inches tall. Hydroids are related to corals, jellies and anemones, all of which use stinging cells to capture their prey. They feed on small plankton that pass within reach.

Basket Stars

This is a freaky creature indeed! The basket star is a sea star related to the brittle star. It has arms with many branches and branchlets. When extended into a current, these branches can capture floating food particles. Once a food item is captured, the branchlet moves the food item to the underside where the mouth is. Basket stars often live on exposed rocks underwater. They can reach a length of up to 30 inches.

Skate

Skates are related to sharks and rays. Lacking hard bones, their skeletons are made of cartilage, like the stuff in your joints. Skates spend their days buried in the sand, with only their eyes and large gills sticking out. At night they come out and swim, using their broad fins like wings. Skates eat bottom-dwelling crustaceans and molluscs. The skate catches food in its mouth and crushes it with flat, block-shaped teeth.