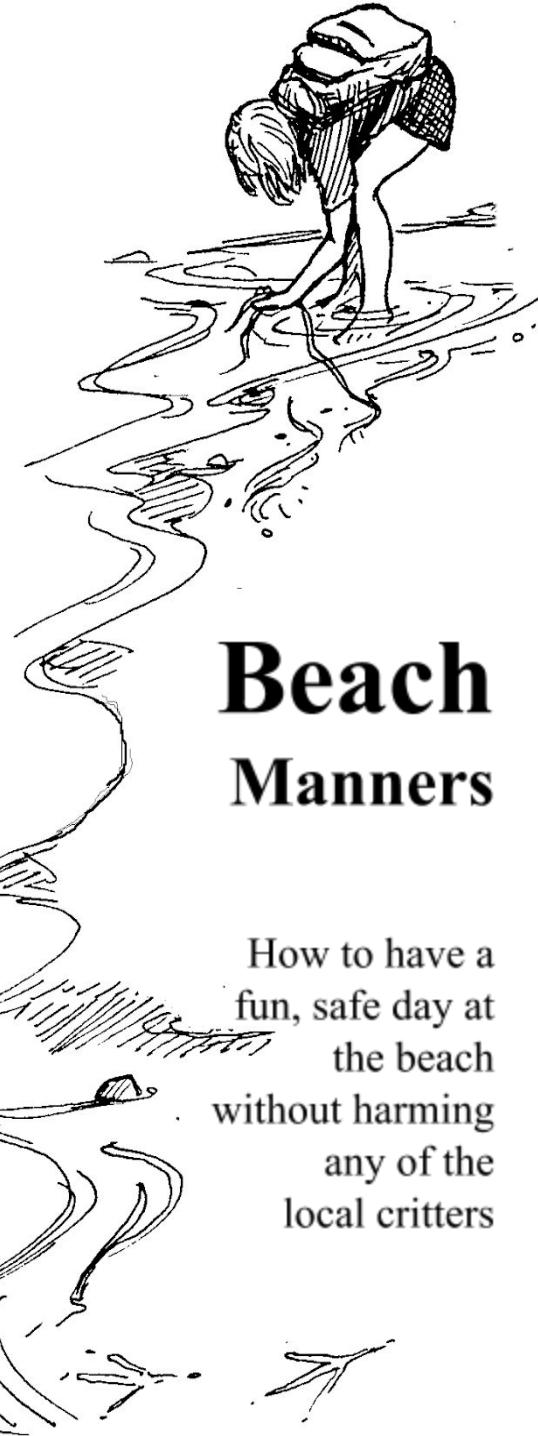


Beach Manners

How to have a fun, safe day at the beach without harming any of the local critters



1. Take nothing from the beach (except garbage!)

Taking animals from their habitat can fatally harm them and it may even be illegal. Shells, rocks, seaweed and driftwood may be homes for animals. If every visitor to the beach took just one shell, there would soon be very little left to enjoy!

2. Pack out your trash

After you've finished exploring and relaxing, take a couple of extra minutes to gather all your belongings and put trash in its proper place. Even one plastic bag can cause lasting damage. Litter can be washed out to sea and eaten by an animal or ruin sensitive habitats.

3. Pick up rocks instead of rolling them, replace the ones you move

Rolling a rock damages everything living on or underneath it. Instead, lift rocks straight up, turn them over to see who is living there, and then gently put them back.



HIGH ZONE

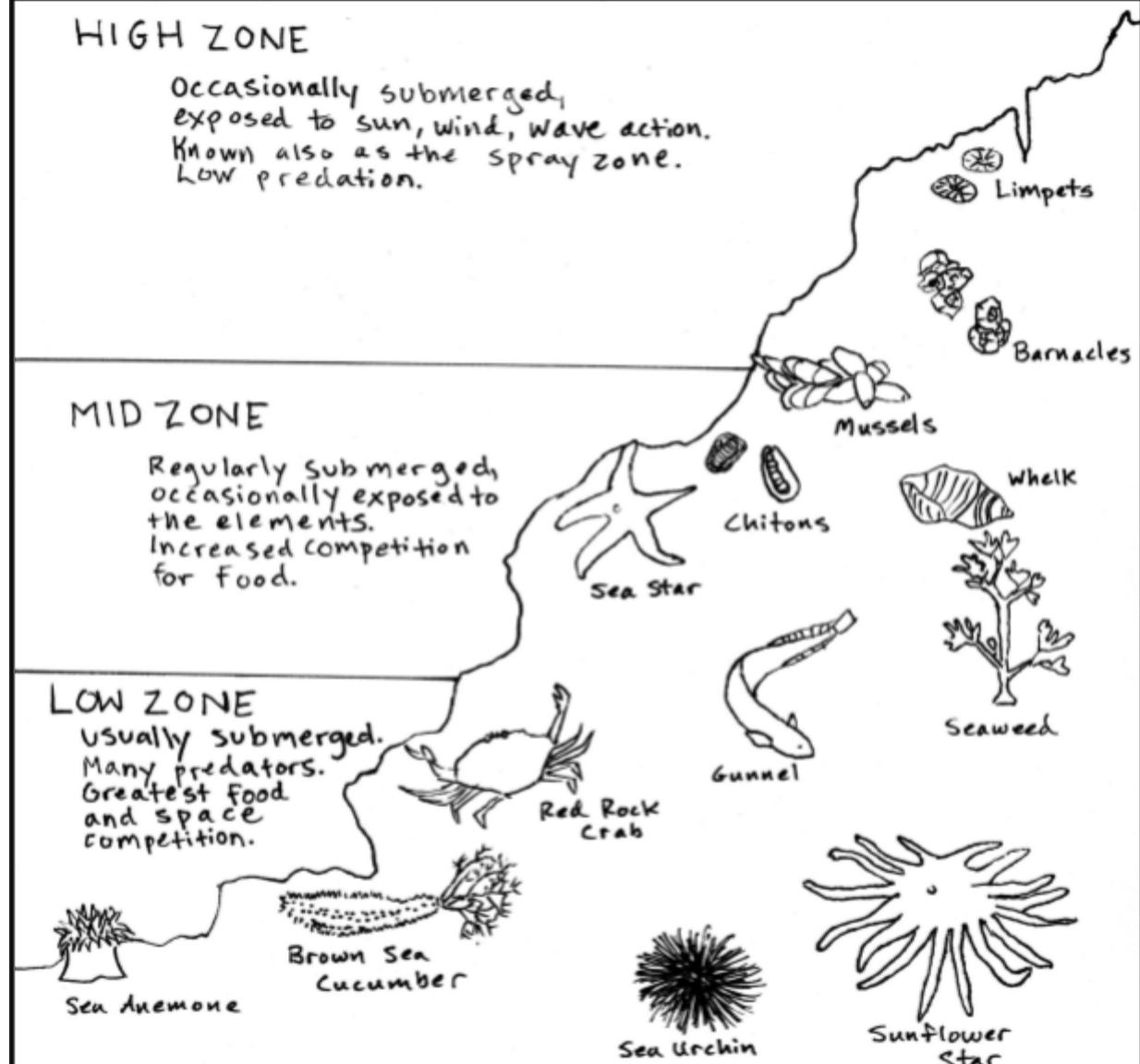
Occasionally submerged, exposed to sun, wind, wave action. Known also as the spray zone. Low predation.

MID ZONE

Regularly submerged, occasionally exposed to the elements. Increased competition for food.

LOW ZONE

Usually submerged. Many predators. Greatest food and space competition.



The beach habitat can be divided into distinct zones, each with different living conditions and its own collection of species. The plants and animals high up on the shore must be able to survive drying, extremes of temperature, and wave action. Since few creatures can survive these harsh conditions there is less competition for food and space than in deeper water. In lower zones, more organisms can survive, but there is also more predation from deep water animals. For outdoor exploration, use the above diagram to help you find species and zones. Remember, always check the local tide tables before you go out to catch the lowest tides!

4. Walk, don't run – watch where you step

The easiest way to see more is to slow down! Running can also be hazardous to you and the critters living on the beach. Stop and explore the organisms living on or under each rock.

5. Never pry anything off the rocks

If it does not let go easily, leave the animal where it is. You may seriously damage or kill an animal if you try to pull it off its rock.

6. Handle Crabs with Caution

Red Rock and Dungeness crabs can pinch hard! Also, in the spring, the crabs are mating and you will often find crabs in pairs. They are more likely to be defensive and, if disturbed, there may not be new baby crabs.

7. Fill in holes you dig

Leaving holes on the beach exposes creatures to predators, and they can be a hazard for people, too! The piles of mud or sand you leave

behind can damage the habitat, too, by blocking the burrows of animals that need to reach air and food at the surface.

8. Be gentle, stay low, and stay wet

When the tide is out, the animals left behind are stressed. They are doing their best to conserve water. If your hands are wet, you can touch the animals (gently!) without drying them out. If you want to pick anything up, stay low to the ground in case it falls. Remember to put the animal back exactly where you found it to ensure its survival.

9. Observe animals where you find them

Don't carry critters far from their homes. If an animal is moved from one tidal zone to another, it may no longer be able to find the food and shelter it needs. Even if an animal appears to be stranded, please leave it alone. Most animals are able to survive until the tide returns; by removing them from their natural habitat, you are doing more harm than good.



Beaches to Visit and Explore

In Port Townsend:

- Kinsey Beach, Ft. Worden State Park
- North Beach County Park
- PT Boat Haven
- Point Hudson

Nearby:

- Oak Bay Park, Port Hadlock
- Mystery Bay State Park, Marrowstone Island
- Fort Flagler State Park, Marrowstone Island
- Indian Island County Park

Farther Afield:

- Salt Creek Recreation Area, Port Angeles
- Fay Bainbridge State Park, Bainbridge Island
- Illahee State Park, Bremerton
- Spencer Spit State Park, Lopez Island
- Jarrell Cove State Park, Harstine Island

