

Rockpooling best practice

Rockpooling is a fun activity that has been enjoyed by families over generations. You can see strange and amazing creatures from marine world that many of us don't see on a day-to-day basis. However, our hands-on approach can often be harmful to the creatures you have come to see. There is another way to enjoy rockpooling that causes much less damage to the environment.

- **Don't flip rocks** - Flipping and turning over rocks can destroy habitats and crush anything that is living underneath.
 - **Watch, see** - Creatures are more active when you stand back and watch. If you are constantly moving and putting your hands in the water many creatures will hide. Standing back and observing is the best opportunity to view Hermit Crabs and Brittlestars moving along the bottom of the pools.
 - **Don't use nets** - they can easily damage soft-bodied creatures and rip off seaweed. Pulling creatures out of their natural environment will cause them huge amounts of stress so try to keep this to a minimum.
 - A shore crab blowing bubbles is a stressed crab.
 - A winkle pulling back into its shell is a stressed winkle.
 - Do not pull creatures out of crevices or remove those stuck to rocks like limpets.
 - Only put one creature at a time into your bucket or tray and only keep creatures for ten minutes as the oxygen they breathe in a small amount of water can soon become depleted and the water can become too warm for them.
 - Remember that many creatures have a home territory. When you have finished please return them all to where they came from.
 - Be aware of birds using the rocky shore and give them plenty of space.
 - These birds are using the area to rest and feed.
 - They are often on the shore after long migrations and they are tired.
 - Some may have young with them, who are more vulnerable to stress.
- If you disturb these birds they waste energy moving away and lose access to feeding grounds.
- Take photos home, not living animals!!
 - **Keep an eye on the tide** - The tide can turn quickly and you need to make sure that you can carefully and slowly leave the rocky shore.

Stay safe and have fun!

