

A SANDY BEACH

A sandy beach is where the land meets the sea. It is a physically harsh habitat. The daily ebb and flow of the tides and the action of waves and currents keeps water in constant motion, shifting the sand below. Specialised animals inhabit this turbulent habitat. The ability to move quickly to stay above the waterline or to burrow in the sand is a common necessity among beach animals. It is a “swim, burrow, or be swept away” habitat. Most sandy beach animals depend on organic debris, called detritus, grown in other habitats. The sandy beach is a major deposition area for not only beach wrack but for anything that floats at the surface – flotsam and jetsam. Plastic and garbage on the beach may be mistaken for food by birds. Oil from spills and chronic pollution washes onto sandy beaches, coating the sand grains and animals. Toxic chemicals of oil kill many animals and may pollute the sandy beach for many years.



THE STRAND-LINE

The strand-line is the area at the top of the shore where natural and man-made objects are washed up by the tide, especially after storms.

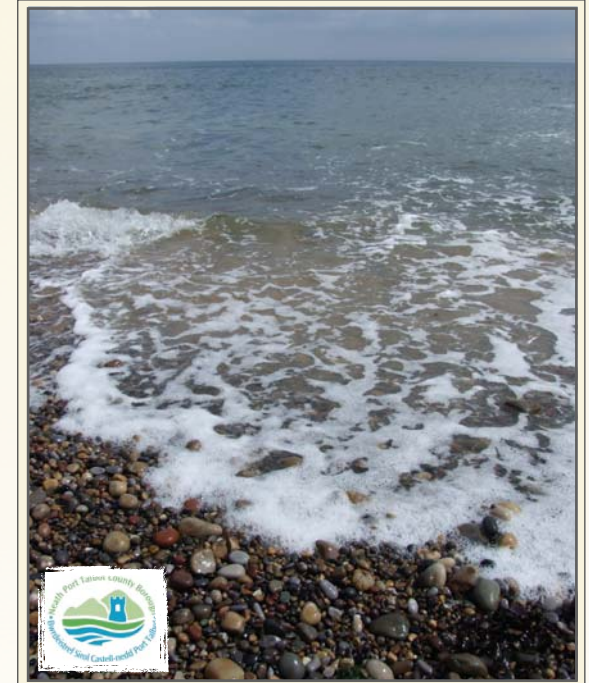
The strand-line can tell us many things about life just off the edge of the coast. It can provide us with clues to the animals that live there, what they look like, the types of eggs they lay and sometimes even how they died.

The animals living here have to be highly adapted to this zone as they may be out of the water for most of the day! They have to cope with extremes of hot and cold water and struggle with dangers of drying out or sometimes being soaked by fresh rainstorms.



SEASIDE LIFE

WHERE WE LIVE



SEASHORE HABITATS

There are a wealth of habitats on offer at the seashore. Here you can find many different creatures living near or in the sea. This leaflet is all about the many interesting and fascinating creatures and where they live. If you spend a little time looking closely at your local seaside you too can observe creatures in their homes!



Many Different Places to Live



THE ROCK POOL

Rock pools offer better survival chances for animals and plants that need to be submerged all the time. Deep rock pools provide shelter from waves, allowing fragile organisms to live on an otherwise exposed rocky shore.



THE CLIFF EDGE

Cliffs can broadly be classified as 'hard cliffs' or 'soft cliffs'. Hard cliffs are vertical or steeply sloping; they support few higher plants other than on ledges and in crevices. They tend to be formed of rocks resistant to weathering, such as granite, sandstone and limestone, but can be formed of softer rocks, such as chalk.

'Soft' cliffs are formed in less resistant rocks such as shales. They often form less steep slopes and so are a better habitat for plants. Soft cliffs provide important breeding sites for sand martins and invertebrates as they provide a suite of conditions which are rarely found together in other habitats. These include the ground beetle, the weevil and the shore bug.

Seashore cliffs are often significant for their populations of seabirds. Many birds nest in colonies far out of reach of predators.

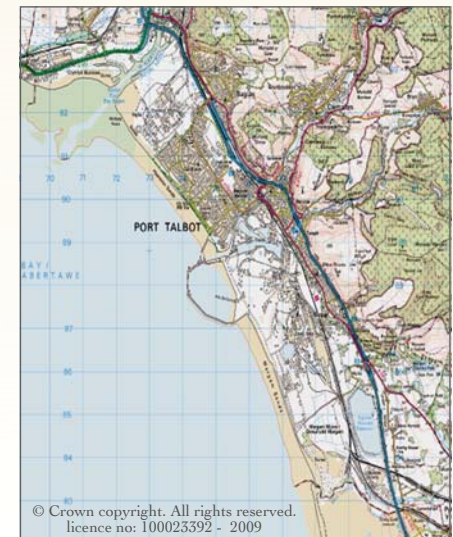
THE SAND DUNES

Sand dunes are sometimes found at the top of beaches, above the high tide mark, but not every beach has dunes. The wind blown sand slowly

forms hills as it blows against something such as bushes, driftwood or rock.

As more sand blows the larger the sand dune grows. Sand dunes can be important ecosystems which support unique plant life and a healthy population of small animals and insects.

The sand dune is always under danger of being eroded by the wind, water and even animals crossing over it.



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