

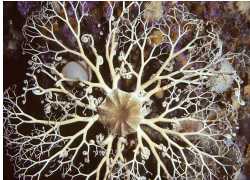


Science Bite

Match the Critter to the Ecosystem

Aquarium Manager, Sandy, collected a few new organisms for the Science Center aquarium. Can you help her figure out which tank they belong in? Draw a line connecting the critter to it's home!

Basket Star



Red Urchin



Shiner Perch



Tube Snout



Sand Dollar



Sea Cucumber



Eel Grass



Sandy Bottom



Urchin Barren



Deep Sea

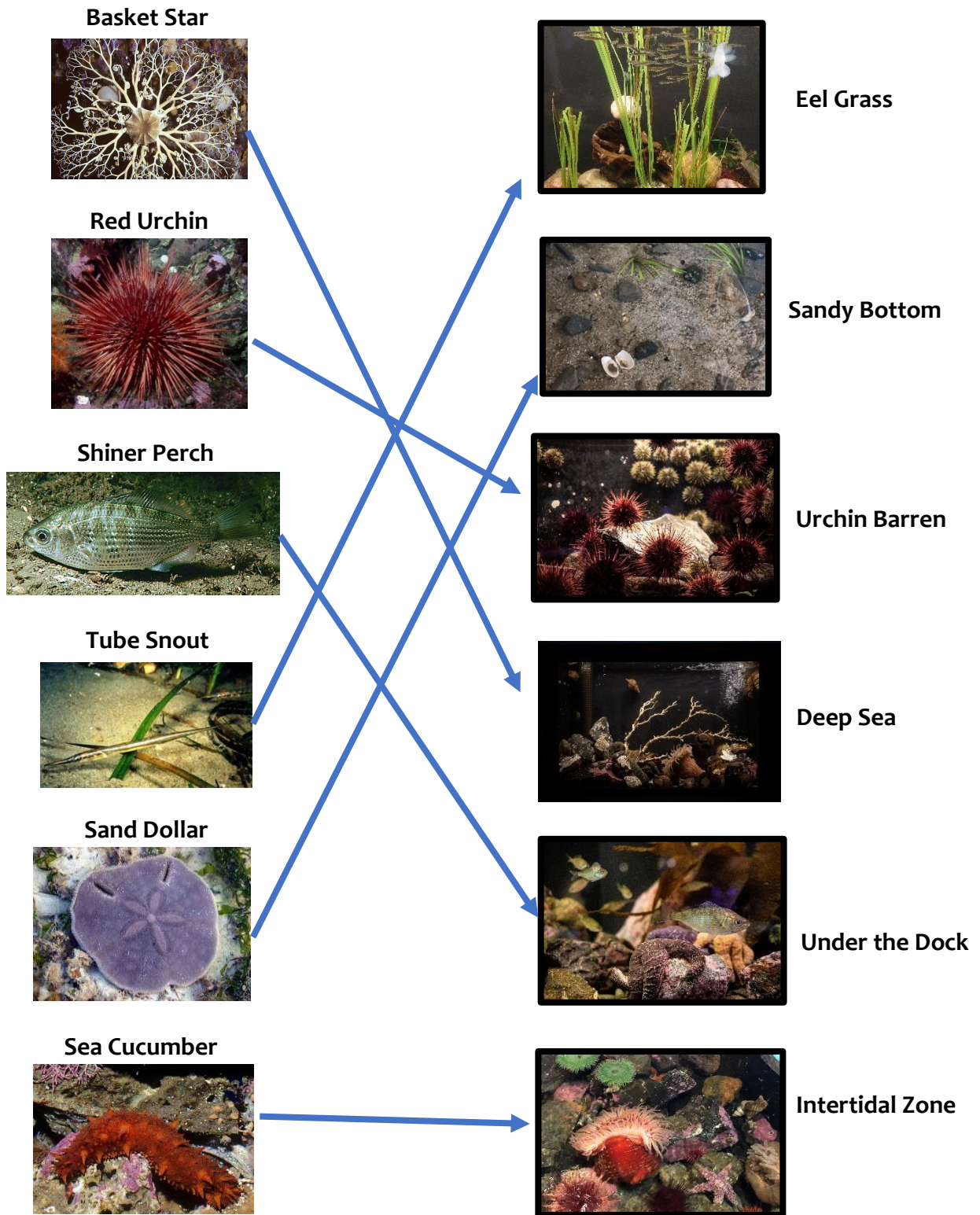


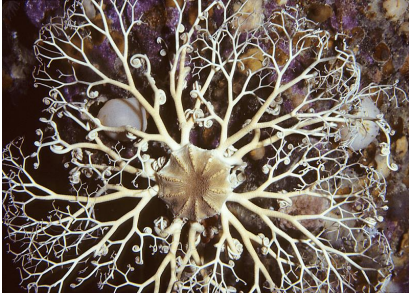
Under the Dock



Intertidal Zone

ANSWER KEY:





Basket Star

Phylum: Echinodermata

Basket stars are a type of brittle star that are found in the deep-sea ecosystem. Basket stars are filter feeders, meaning they strain suspended matter and food particles from the water. They typically position themselves on corals, sponges, rocks, or the ocean floor where they'll extend their coiled arms to form a feeding basket that traps their prey.



Red Urchin

Phylum: Echinodermata

Red urchins are found in rocky subtidal habitats where they can graze on attached or drifting kelp. Urchins hold onto kelp with their suction cup-like tube feet and can use their spines and tube feet to move the food to their mouth located on the underside of the urchin. If the population growth of sea urchins has gone unchecked, their grazing can be destructive to kelp forests creating an urchin barren.



Shiner Perch

Phylum: Chordata

Shiner perch prefer shallow water and are commonly found in bays around eel grass beds and near harbor pilings. They are able to adapt to brackish and fresh water. Shiner perch eat small crustaceans, mollusks, worms, and fish eggs. Shiner perch are viviparous, meaning they do not lay eggs like most fish but instead they bear live young.



Tube Snout

Phylum: Chordata

Tube snouts are named for their extended snouts. They can be found in kelp beds, eel grass, and over sandy bottoms. Tube snouts tend to hang out in dense schools near the surface of the water and they feed on small crustaceans and fish eggs.



Sand Dollar

Phylum: Echinodermata

Sand Dollars can be found buried in the sand with half their bodies under sand and half sticking out. They are filter feeders, meaning they use the small spines that cover their bodies to snag crustacean larva, plankton, and other small prey from the water. The food is slowly passed from spine to spine until it reaches the mouth on the underside of the body. Sand dollars use their tube feet to move slowly across the ocean floor.



California Sea Cucumber

Phylum: Echinodermata

Sea cucumbers can be found in the low intertidal zone on rocks and in cracks and crevices. They are deposit feeders, meaning they collect organic matter and microorganisms as they move along rocks and bottom substrates. When threatened, sea cucumbers expel their guts, which later re-grow.