



**Species Highlights**

**Explore Your  
Shore**

**2024**

## Explore Your Shore, 2024

### SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024 the Aquarium recorded over 100 species that live in our Rockpools, through Explore Your Shore.

In this series we hope to offer some insights about the top species we found, and thoughts about the value of participating in this really important part of Citizen Science.

### ABOUT

Explore Your Shore! is a national survey of marine and coastal biodiversity to create a robust baseline dataset for intertidal plant and animal species in Ireland, explore intertidal species as bio-indicators of climate change and water quality, and highlight the issues of climate change and water quality to the public.

The survey is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Explore Your Shore! surveys focused on intertidal species, and Irish Marine Biodiversity Citizen Science surveys operated by our project partners.

Contributing to these surveys will help us better understand where and when marine species occur around our coast, and how they are being affected by climate change, water quality and other human impacts.

Source: <https://exploreyourshore.ie/>

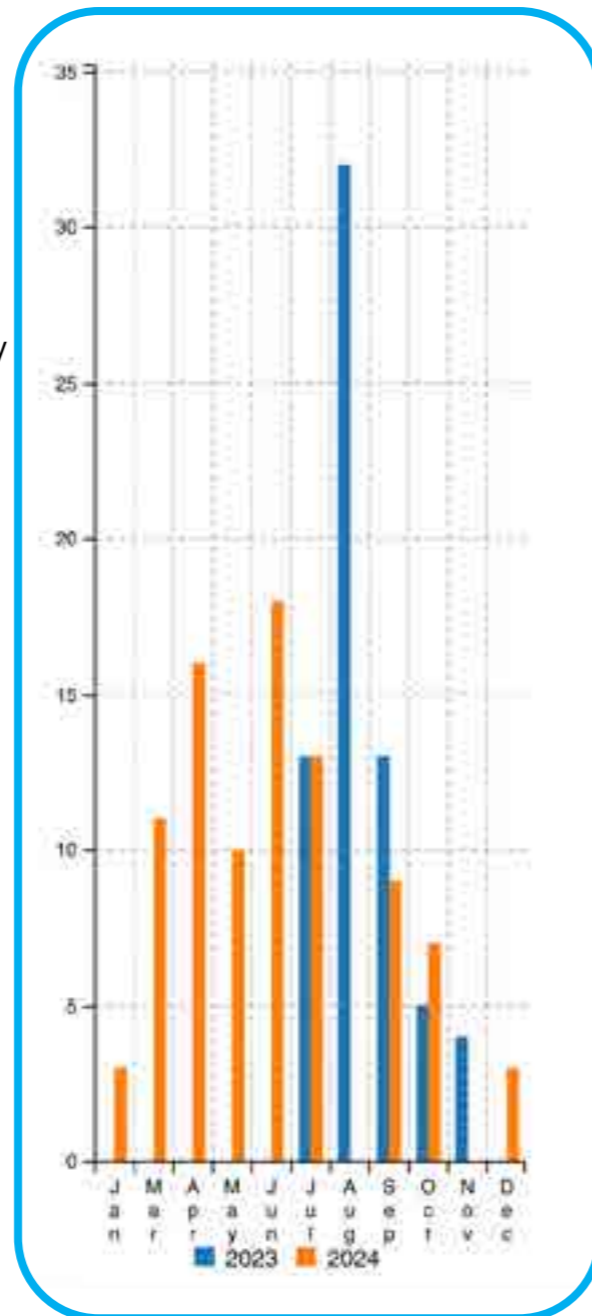


Image: Species recorded in 2023 & 2024



## Ireland's Marine Biodiversity Citizen Science Platform

Explore Your Shore! is building our knowledge of the occurrence of marine species around the Irish coast, and what they tell us about climate change and water quality.

### Explore Your Shore Resources

A Baked Bean Tombstone  
(*Dendrodoa grossularia*)  
Grattan Beach, Salthill.

# Let's Explore Our Shore...

# Snail By The Sea



While it might seem odd, you can find snails close to the shore. If the Dunes are healthy the Marram Grass and other flora offer snails a safe habitat free from Salt! A fantastic example of nature and nurture.



# BIO-ENGINEERS



Image (right):  
A two chamber Sand mason worm structure.



Sand mason worm *Lanice conchilega*

This worm builds its own home out of bits of shell and sand.

Sand mason worms use grains of sand and fragments of shell to build a protective tube to live in.

The worm and most of the tube are buried in the sand, with just the top of the tube sticking out.

The tops of the tubes can be crowned with an ornate branched structure built of sand and shell.

This structure is used for catching food and looks a bit like a mini sand tree.

The tops of the tubes can be spotted on beaches at low tide. When the tide comes in, they feed using a pretty crown of tentacles to catch passing particles or search for particles on the surrounding seabed.

They can be found alone or in dense beds of thousands of individuals.



# Lichen

Lichen under the scope truly amazing, A lichen is a hybrid colony of algae or cyanobacteria living symbiotically among filaments of multiple fungi species, along with yeasts and bacteria embedded in the cortex or "skin", in a mutualistic relationship.

Lichens are the lifeform that first brought the term symbiosis under biological context.

When lichens are dry, they "turn off", become brittle and go dormant. This process is known as "poikilohydry", and other organisms such as mosses and liverworts operate in the same way.

See our most [popular Lichen video of 2024](#).



## Sea Urchin with stone hats

By covering themselves with materials from their environment, sea urchins can blend in better with their surroundings, helping them avoid predators.

The added materials can provide physical protection against predators and environmental hazards.

## A Nursery For All

No matter how much you explore the shore, you will always see something new. The beauty of the Rockpools means you will often miss the smallest of life just born. Amazing.



## Pillbug

*(Jaera albifrons or Sphaeroma serratum)*

The Pillbug (a.k.a. Roly-poly) can roll into a ball via conglobation, its segmented, flexible exoskeleton also allows it to hold onto moisture, a really good trick when the tide goes out!



## Look Closer...



### Look Closer

As you begin to explore the shore, your eye seems to change. At the start of any Explore Your Shore activity you can get disillusioned.... There are no species to be seen

However, if you stick with it, you will start to see more, and learn where to find hundreds of species by the shore.





## Explore Your Shore, 2024

After a year of EYS The Aquarium has amassed an amazing library of Marine Life that can be found in our Rockpool.

We have learned so much and are delighted to be part of this important Citizen Science work.

It is a fantastic hobby, and the team at the National Biodiversity Data Centre have loads of resources to get you started.

Remember;

- We need to keep our beaches clean and free from litter.
- We NEED more people to record the biodiversity by the shore.

In 2025, you can be an Explore Your Shore Champion,  
**Let's Go Explore The Shore.**





# Explore Your Shore 2024