

Invertebrate Diversity Lab

Grade Level: All

Summary: This lab is a part of our core curriculum and appropriate for all grade levels. Students will briefly be introduced to the concept of diversity and how stable diversity corresponds to a stable, healthy habitat. Students will identify and count the number of invertebrates they find on the live rock staff collected from Largo Sound. The lab concludes by staff projecting a sample of every species found for all to see and discuss.

**** service learning option available **** (This option includes data collection and analysis. Suited for advanced students.)

Program Objectives:

- Students will practice using the common characteristics of the common marine phyla to identify specific species of invertebrates
- Students will understand the association of a healthy, diverse community and a healthy, stable environment

Concepts:

- Diversity of invertebrates found in protected areas such as algae covered rocks
- Phylum characteristics of observed organisms
- Association between high diversity and a healthy, stable environment
- Fragile nature of the environment
- Concept of indicator species
- Environmental impact studies

Vocabulary: invertebrate, diversity, abundance

Procedures: The lab begins with a brief discussion relating diversity of a habitat to healthy and stability. Each pair of students are given live rock collected from Largo Sound and tools to identify all invertebrates found living on their rock. A staff person will collect a sample of every species the group finds and project each invertebrate on a large screen for the entire group to identify and discuss.

Extensions: The same concept and procedure can be applied to any microhabitat

