#### Beachcomber's Guide

### **Solway Shells**

Identify common beach shells found on the Solway coast







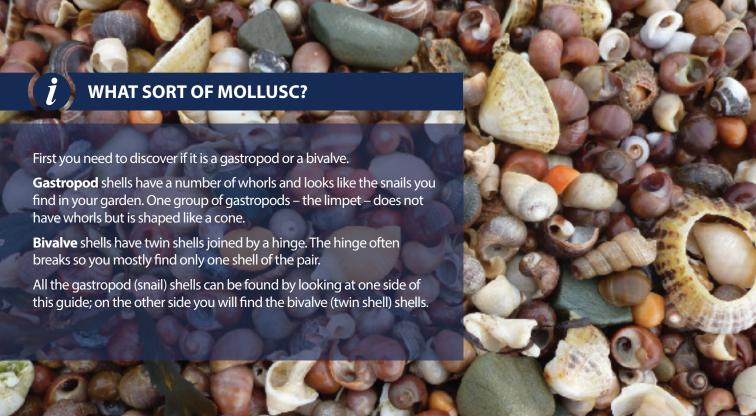
This guide will help you identify 16 common shells of more than 100 different sea shells found washed up on our beaches. The more you look the more you will find so if your shell does not match those in this guide then search the internet or a seashore nature book to help with identification.

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### **Common whelk**

**Buccinum undatum** 

**Looks:** Large spiral shell

Found: On sand and mud

Eats: Scavenger

#### Did you know?

'Wash balls' are clusters of whelk egg capsules found on the strandline.





Ensis siliqua

**Looks:** Thin straight-sided shell

Found: Buried vertically in sand

**Eats:** Filters food from the sea

#### Did you know?

Called "spouts" because they squirt up water as they quickly burrow.

### Flat periwinkle

Littorina obtusata / Littorina fabalis

**Looks:** Small round shell of

many colours

Found: On seaweeds

Eats: Algae

#### Did you know?

There are several kinds of flat periwinkle which are not easy to identify because some only differ in the way they lay their eggs.

### **Baltic tellin**

Macoma balthica

**Looks:** Small shell with a strong hinge so the two halves are often found together

Found: In sand

Eats: Filters food from the sea



#### Did you know?

Common in estuaries because it is tolerant of fresh water. It is a favourite food of wading birds.

# Pelican's foot shell

Aporrhais pes-pelicani

**Looks:** A sculptured shell with a flattened 'webbed foot' shaped lip when adult

Found: On sand

**Eats:** Feeds on debris on the sea bed



#### Did you know?

The 'webbed foot' helps it to glide over sand.

# Rayed trough shell

Mactra stultorum

**Looks:** A fragile shell often

purple inside

Found: In clean sand

Eats: Filters food from the sea



#### Did you know?

The light shells are often washed up on the strandline.

### **Common limpet**

Patella vulgata

**Looks:** A cone shaped shell of many colours, shapes and sizes

Found: On rocks

Eats: Algae

#### Did you know?

The most common of the limpets which wander under water but return before the tide goes out.



### **Common mussel**

Mytilus edulis

**Looks:** Black to blue and/or silver when worn

Found: On rocks

**Eats:** Filters particles from water

#### Did you know?

The mussel attaches itself to rocks by threads.



### **Common winkle**

Littorina littorea

**Looks:** Largest of the winkles; the colour varies from brown to black

Found: On rocks

Eats: Algae

#### Did you know?

Gathered at low tide, the winkles are sent off to be processed into a seaside snack.



### Striped venus

Chamelea gallina

**Looks:** A clam sometimes with reddish coloured rays

Found: In clean sand

**Eats:** Filters particles from water

#### Did you know?

This pretty shell is the favourite food of many wading birds.



## Dog whelk Nucella lapillus

**Looks:** A snail-shaped shell of many colours, shapes and sizes

Found: On rocks

**Eats:** A carnivore

#### Did you know?

It drills a straight sided hole to eat barnacles and mussels



### Common cockle

Cerastoderma edule

**Looks:** A chubby, ribbed shell

Found: In sand and mud

**Eats:** Filters particles from water

#### Did you know?

You can tell the age of this highly prized seafood by counting the rings on its shell.



### **Grey top shell**

Gibbula cineraria

### Purple top shell

Gibbula umbilicalis

**Looks:** These top shells are very similar but the purple top shell is flatter with more distinct markings

**Found:** On rocks and in rockpools

Eats: Algae



#### Did you know?

A worn Grey top shell is also called a "silver tommy" when the shiny shell is exposed.

### **Queen scallop**

Aequipecten opercularis

**Looks:** Two curved shells in a variety of colours: red, orange and white

Found: On sand and gravel

**Eats:** Filters particles from water

#### Did you know?

It can flap away from an approaching predator such as a starfish.





