

# CEPHALOPODS

Cephalopods are a class of marine mollusks that include squids, cuttlefishes and octopuses. They share many common characteristics: they can move by expelling water from a tubular siphon under their heads; they have arms (which usually have suckers) around the fronts of their heads; they have highly developed eyes; and they squirt ink to hide and/or defend themselves.

## FAST FACTS: GIANT PACIFIC OCTOPUS

The giant Pacific octopus is the largest species of octopus in the world, and can be found right here in the waters of Puget Sound.

Giant Pacific octopuses can **change color at will**, expressing mood, comfort level and intentions to nearby animals. They're also able to change texture, using knobs of muscle to mimic their surroundings.

## FAST FACTS: RED OCTOPUS

Red octopuses tend to live alone, spending time with others of their species only at the ends of their lives, when they mate before dying.

Ranging in color from solid yellow, brown or red to a variety of mottled colors with white spots, the red octopus doesn't seem very aptly named—until you see its reddish or red-brown ink!



Red octopuses are **generalist predators**, which means they basically eat

whatever they can catch near where they live.

## FAST FACTS: CUTTLEFISH



Cuttlefishes are sometimes called "**the chameleons of the sea**" because of their ability to change color—even their pattern and texture—in the blink of an eye.

The cuttlefish gets its name from its cuttlebone—an internal, porous structure that helps to regulate buoyancy.



**Cuttlefishes are unique in that no other cephalopods have cuttlebones.**



The most common cuttlefish predators are large fish, sharks and even other cuttlefish—sometimes of the same species!



There are approximately **120 known species of cuttlefish** in the world, including the dwarf cuttlefish on exhibit at the Seattle Aquarium.

**The plural of octopus isn't octopi—it's octopuses.**

**Red octopuses can and will bite**—if you're lucky enough to see one in the wild, don't touch it! Their venom can cause very painful local effects.



**It can be difficult to tell the difference between a young red octopus and a young giant Pacific octopus.** Check the eyes: red octopuses have three tiny flaps, or "eyelashes," below each eye; giant Pacific octopuses do not.

The arm span of a giant Pacific octopus can be up to an incredible **20 feet across**—about the height of a two-story building!



**Giant Pacific octopuses** can consume 2–4% and gain 1–2% of their body weight each day. That's the equivalent of a 150-pound person eating up to **six pounds of food and gaining up to three pounds every single day!**

