

EELGRASS, KELP FOREST OR BOTH?

Eelgrass beds and kelp forests provide homes and camouflage for all kinds of marine animals. Some prefer the dense “underwater meadow” of the eelgrass bed; others are more comfortable in the swaying fronds of the kelp forest. And some spend time in both habitats!

EELGRASS BED



Lumpsucker: This small round fish has modified pelvic fins that work as a suction disk and allow it to attach to rocks, shells and blades of eelgrass.



Bay Pipefish: Like its relation the sea horse, this fish has an extended mouth and tiny fins. Its body is elongated and its skin is green, blending in with blades of eelgrass.

BOTH



Gunnel: These long, thin bottom fish have bodies that resemble ribbon-like blades of kelp or eelgrass. They choose habitats where they can camouflage themselves.



Juvenile rockfish: Since they are not fast swimmers, these fish prefer to hover or sit “as still as a rock” among the kelp fronds to go unnoticed by predators.

KELP FOREST



Shrimp/prawn: At night, these animals move into the shallow water of the kelp forest, using their long antennae to find the worms and small crustaceans that they like to eat.



Tubesnout: These small, stick-like fish swim in schools and search for an ample supply of small crustaceans and worms.



Shiner perch: Named for their silvery sides, shiner perch can be found swimming in large schools in shallow water, where their shiny sides blend in with light from above.



Sea Urchin: Found in most areas where kelp grows, sea urchins use their movable spines like chopsticks, holding onto the kelp until they can grab it with tiny suction cup tube feet and pull it to their mouths.