

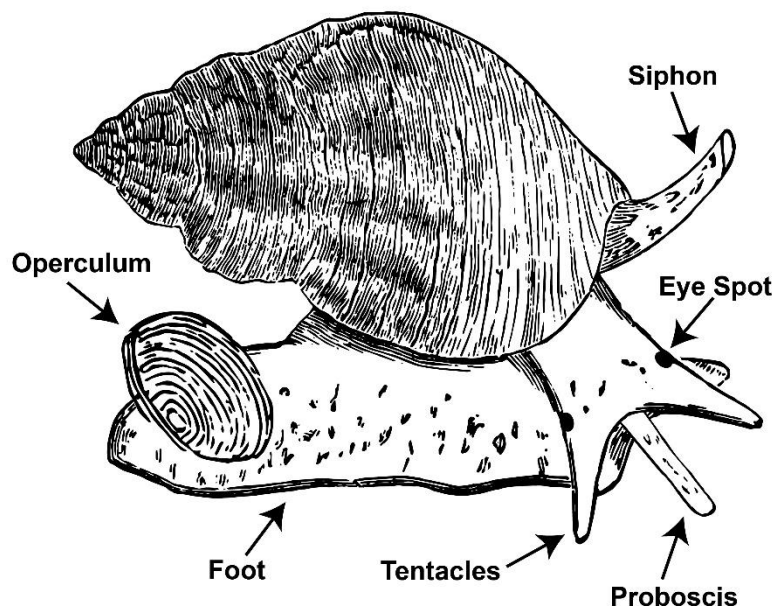
Whelks

What are we?

Whelks are predatory sea snails. Scientifically they are known as **gastropods**.

What do we look like?

Whelks are long, soft-bodied animals with a spiral shell. The shell has one opening called an **aperture**. A muscular foot emerges through the aperture and is used to move around. An **operculum** is attached to the foot and acts as a door when the snail retracts inside of its shell. A **siphon** draws in oxygen rich water. **Tentacles** on the head are used to sense prey. Black **eye spots** are located at the base of the tentacles. A **proboscis** is a tube-like feature on the head with a mouth and **radula** (teeth).



Where do we live?

Whelks are found in marine waters around the world. Whelks usually prefer sandy or muddy habitats.

What do we eat?

Whelks are **carnivores** and prey on clams, oysters, mussels, and other sea snails.

Who/what are our predators?

Crabs, sea turtles, sea stars, urchins, cod feed on whelks.

Did you know?

Whelks appeared on earth before dinosaurs.

A whelk feeds by using the lip of its shell to chip away at a clam and uses its strong muscular foot to separate the shells. It then inserts its proboscis to digest the meat. Sometimes whelks feed on bivalves or snails using a secretion to soften the shell then drilling a hole with its radula.

Whelks are **invertebrates**. They do not possess an internal skeletal system. **What other invertebrates do you know?**

Whelks are part of a larger group of animals called **mollusks** that includes clams, oysters, scallops, squids, and octopuses.

Mollusks with one shell are **univalves** and those with two shells are **bivalves**.

Whelks are consumed by people around the world and are delicious! **Have you ever tried them?**

Whelks do not have complex eyes.

Whelks can live up to forty years.

A whelk's color depends on the food it eats.

Channeled whelks, knobbed whelks, and lightening whelks make strings of egg cases. Each case contains hundreds of eggs that develop into tiny baby whelks.



Whelk Word Search

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GASTROPOD

MOLLUSK

SHELL

INVERTEBRATE

EYES

PREDATOR

MOLLUSK

OYSTER

APERTURE

PROBOSCIS

SIPHON

CLAM

MOUTH

SNAIL

FOOT

KNOBBED

PREY

BIVALVE