

The “Good Tidepooler Rules”

For the past nine years the Orange County Marine Protected Area Committee has been focused on the conservation of the rocky intertidal. One of the major accomplishments of the Committee was the establishment of the “Good Tidepooler Rules” and its adoption in the signage at all County MPAs. Recognizing that our tidepools are being “loved to death” it is essential that teachers convey the message of careful and effective exploration of this environment. The following guidelines have been set up to help tidepool explorers minimize their impact on tidepool organisms and habitat.



1. Never remove animals, shells or rocks from the tidepools.

Placing animals in buckets, even for a short time, is like leaving a dog in a hot car. The high temperatures can kill the delicate tidepool animals. When you remove rocks and shells, even broken and empty ones, you are taking a future hermit crab home or camouflage for an anemone or sea urchin.



2. Never pick up animals...observe them where they are.

We are visitors in the tidepool creature's neighborhood. Picking up animals and putting them down in another part of the refuge is like something picking us up from our home...and putting us down IN ALASKA! We would feel very out of place. So do the animals.



3. Walk gently, taking care not to step on plants or animals.

Many animals in the tidepool take cover in the cracks and in seaweed that grows on the rocks. Careless footsteps can crush animals we can't see hiding in the tidepools.



4. Never turn over rocks.

Tidepool creatures hide under rocks for many reasons. When you turn rocks over you may leave the animals exposed to the hot sun and they may not survive. You might also leave them out in the open where they may be eaten by predators like birds and fish.