

Kelp Forest Collage

Discover the role of sea otters in keeping the kelp forest healthy!

Materials Needed:

Kelp Forest Printable (or draw your own), large piece of white paper, green tissue paper, watercolor paints, paintbrush, salt, blue yarn, crayons or colored pencils, scissors, glue.

Instructions:

Step 1: Paint the ocean. Use a paintbrush to spread water on a piece of white paper. Paint the ocean on the wet paper with watercolors, but leave about two inches of white at the top of the paper. Sprinkle salt over the paper to add a watery texture. Leave the salt in place until the paint is completely dry.

Step 2: Add animals. Color and cut out the printed animals. Grown-ups can help cut out animals.

Step 3: Make kelp. Cut or tear strips of green tissue paper to make kelp.

Step 4: Assemble your kelp forest collage. When the paper is dry, brush the salt off. Glue the tissue paper in the ocean to make the kelp forest. Glue a piece of blue yarn at the top of the water for the surface. Add the sea otters floating on the surface, and other animals in the kelp.



Image: Linda Tanner, Flickr.

While your collage dries, watch sea otters on the Monterey Bay Aquarium live cam:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TO7J7649FK8

Kelp Forest Printable

Sea Otters



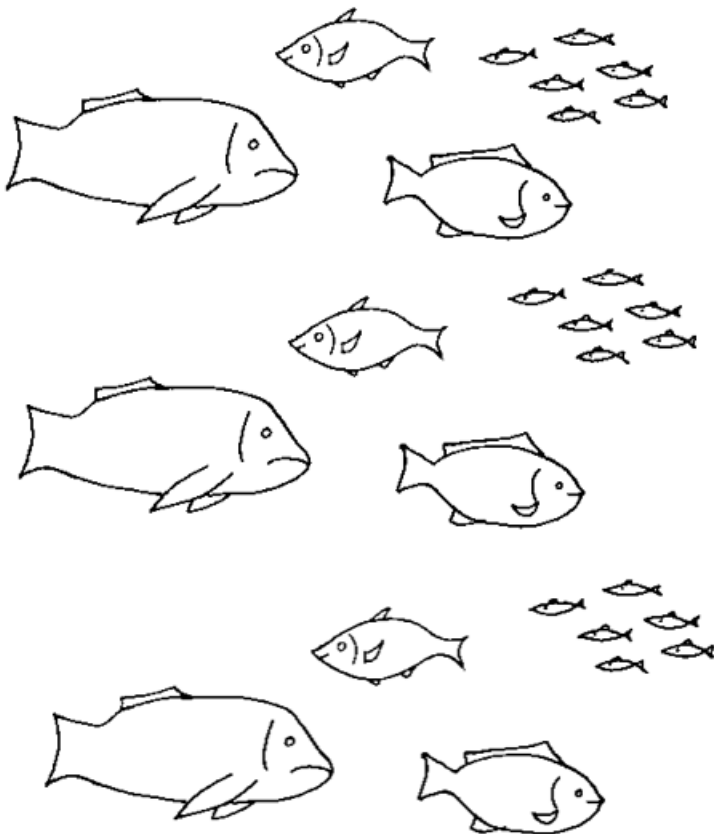
Snails and Sea Stars



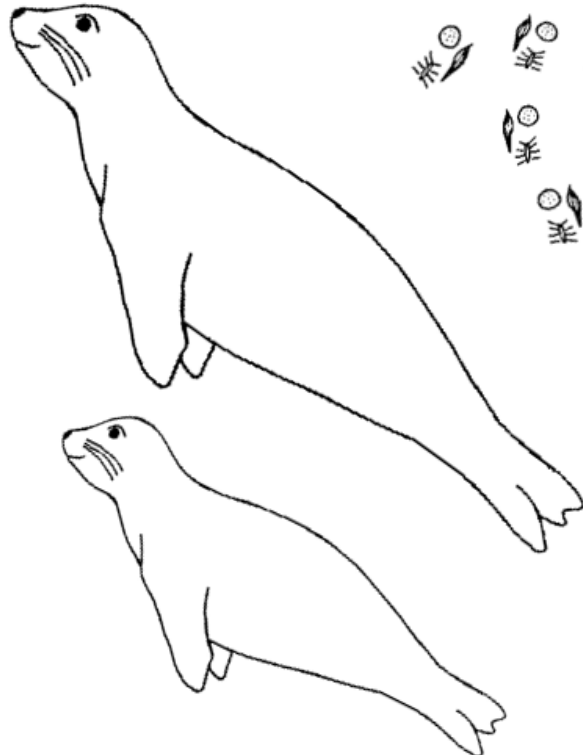
Sea Urchins



Fish



Seals



Phytoplankton



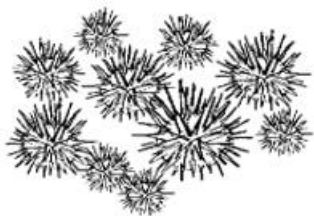
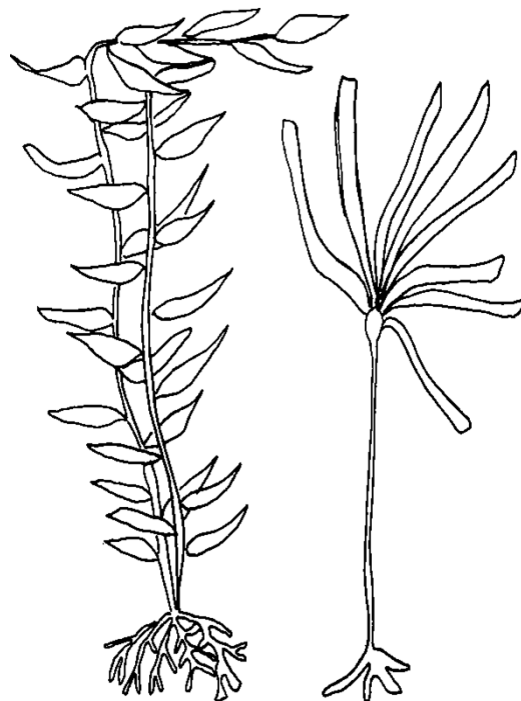
The Kelp Forest Ecosystem

Discover some of the species of the kelp forest and how they interact!



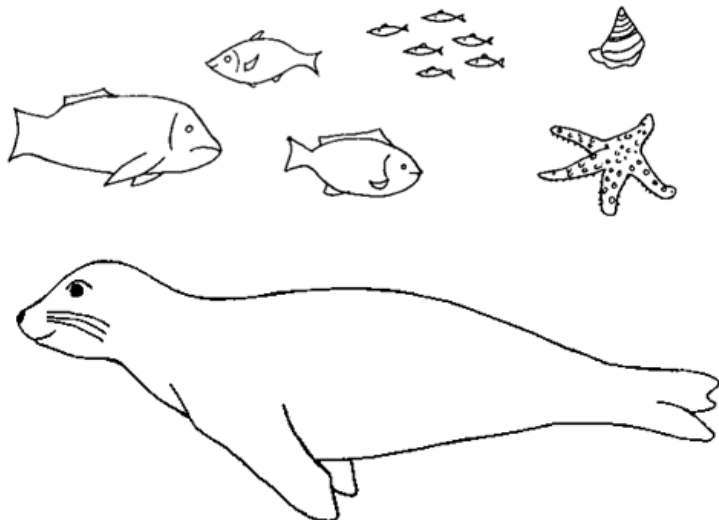
Sea otters are predators. They dive underwater to eat sea urchins, sea stars, crabs, clams, and other small ocean animals. They are called a *keystone species* because they keep the ecosystem healthy.

Kelp are large seaweed (brown algae) that grow into giant underwater forests along coasts. Kelp forests are a habitat for thousands of species. Kelp absorbs carbon dioxide and keeps ocean water healthy so it can be full of life.



Sea urchins eat a lot of kelp. If an area of kelp forest has too many sea urchins, it will become *barren* (without plant life).

Phytoplankton bloom in sunlight, produce oxygen, and are the base of the food chain.



Kelp forests provide food and shelter for many fish, invertebrates, marine mammals, and sea birds. Some animals feed on kelp, and some eat the animals that live in kelp. Many animals raise their young and shelter from storms in kelp forests.