

COMMON OCTOPUS



Photo by Meet the Sea

Behaviour

The common octopus is able to squeeze into very small spaces because of the softness of its body, and they spend a lot of its time hiding (like in the picture above). This is partly to avoid predators, but also so that they can sneak out and catch prey by surprise. They are able to camouflage themselves and change both their colour and texture to blend in with their surroundings, which can make them very difficult to spot.

Octopus arms are also particularly interesting - and not just because they have eight of them. As well as having a central brain in their heads, each of an octopus's arms has its own 'mini-brain' which help them act independently and sense the environment around them (particularly using touch and taste).

Octopuses have also been observed using tools, making them one of the only invertebrate species with this skill. One of the most common ways they seem to do this is by piling items (like rocks and shells) around them to help secure a hiding place.

Scientific Name:

Octopus Vulgaris

Key Information

One of the most intelligent species of octopus, and also one of the most studied. The common octopus can be found in the eastern and western Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean.

They typically live for around one or two years, and when fully grown can weigh up to about 9kg.

Curiosities

A common octopus has around 500 million neurons (brain cells), which is nearly the same as most dogs. Research has found that they're clever enough to navigate mazes, unscrew jars, and even recognise specific people.

Food

The common octopus usually hunts around dusk, searching for other marine life such as crabs, crayfish and other small mollusks (but they're known to eat almost anything if they can catch it). They have also been observed keeping 'octopus gardens', where they collect shells, rocks, plants and algae, and sometimes the easiest way to find an octopus is to look for a pile of discarded crab shells after its been eating.

Although the body of an octopus is very soft, they have a beak hidden between their arms which is tough enough to break open the shells of their food.



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