

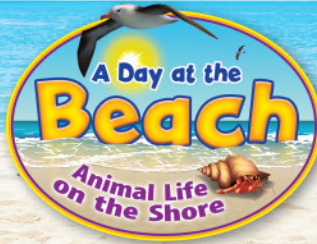
Beach Fleas

and Other
Tiny Sand
Animals



by Ellen Lawrence

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and Other Tiny Sand Animals

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Meet the Beach Fleas

A beach is often home to seals, seagulls, and crabs.

Did you know that it's also home to millions of tiny animals, including beach fleas?


These mini-creatures bury themselves in the sand under seaweed.

Lift up a piece of seaweed, and dozens of beach fleas may be hiding underneath!

Beach fleas are also known as sand hoppers or beach hoppers. How do you think they got their name?



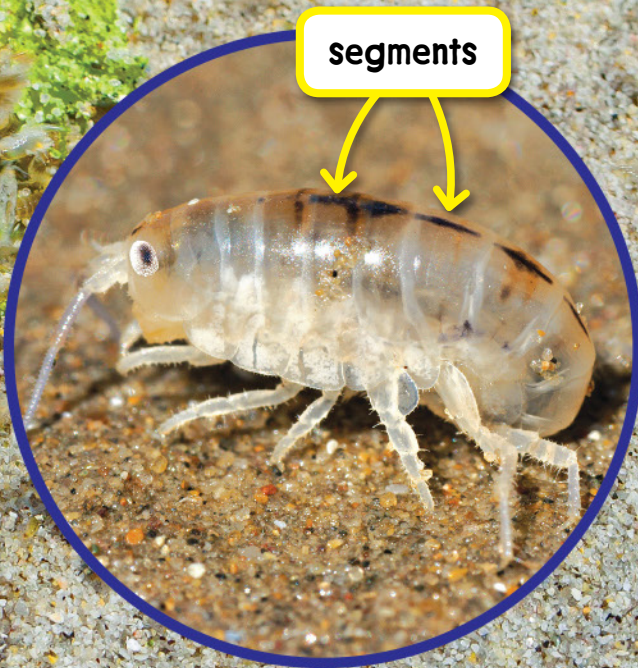
students studying beach fleas



A beach flea
is a type of tiny
crustacean. It has an
outer shell and a body
that's made up
of segments, or
sections.

beach fleas

segments



Clean-Up Crew

A beach flea, or sand hopper, is less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) long.

It may be tiny, but it's an excellent jumper.

Boing! It can leap 3 feet (0.9 m) in a single jump!

During the day, a beach flea often burrows into the sand.

This keeps its body from drying out in the sun.

At night, it looks for dead seaweed and plants to eat.



beach fleas buried in sand

A close-up photograph of a translucent beach flea (amphipod) on green seaweed. The flea has a segmented body with dark spots and long antennae. It is surrounded by small white particles, likely sand or debris. A yellow callout box points to the flea, and a seashell-shaped callout box contains text about their role in cleaning beaches. A blue callout box at the bottom asks a question about the flea's jumping ability.

a beach flea
eating seaweed

Beach fleas
help clean up dead,
smelly seaweed that covers
some beaches. They may
be tiny, but there
are lots of them to
do the work.

Why do you think being a good
jumper is helpful to a beach flea?