

Activity suggestion:

Where will you find an octopus?

How many legs does an octopus have?

Try to find out what does an octopus eats.

Is an octopus a vertebrate or an invertebrate?



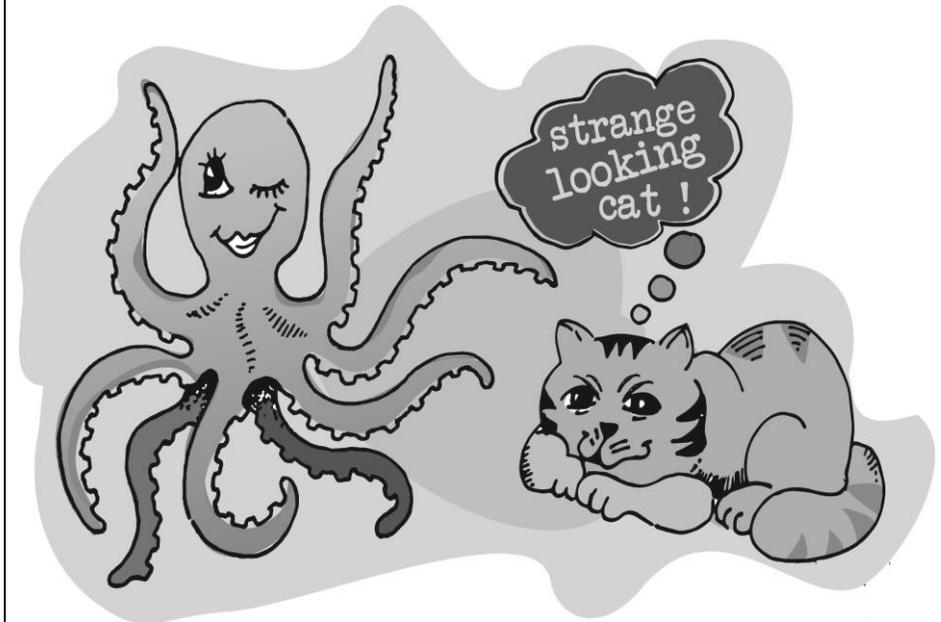
A Whale Coast Conservation Youth Environment Programme Project



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THE SEA CAT



BY STRIPES
THE ECO-CAT

Panic! Panic! I heard my Denfred human say he saw a sea cat in a rock pool down by the sea! Just what I was afraid of - there is already another cat who wants to be a Hope Spot Eco-Cat and he is already a sea cat while I'm still learning to like water.

"Calm down", Denfred said to me, "it's not a sea cat - I said *seekat*, which means an octopus".

"Well what is a puss if not a cat?" I asked in a dizzy tizz. "Tell me who this cool cat sea cat is."

Denfred laughed. I wish they wouldn't laugh at me so much - I'm only a young cat wanting to learn. I think I'm pretty smart for my age and species.

He then told me that 'octopus' comes from the word 'octopod', which means eight limbs and that this cool cat creature has eight arms.

Have you ever heard of an animal with eight arms or legs? OK, you're right, spiders have eight legs.

Denfred then told me some stuff I can hardly believe. He said an octopus is a sort of sea snail, or

at least it's from the same family.

"Well what is it to be", I wanted to know, "is it a cat or a snail?"

Denfred said it's definitely not a cat but it is a creature with no skeleton (so it's an invertebrate) with eight arms and it's related to snails.

"Wow! Does this many-legged snail with no backbone have a brain or is it stupid like a snail?" I was really hoping Denfred would say it's not as clever as me.

But my hopes were dashed. "The octopus is actually the smartest of all the invertebrates. It can learn things very quickly, especially how to find food. It can also hide in very small places between rocks because it has no bones and can squeeze its soft body into tiny spaces. They have to be fast learners because they only live for a year or two and then die as soon as they have laid their eggs to make their babies".

Gosh, now I'm relieved I'm not a sea cat but a real cat with nine lives!