

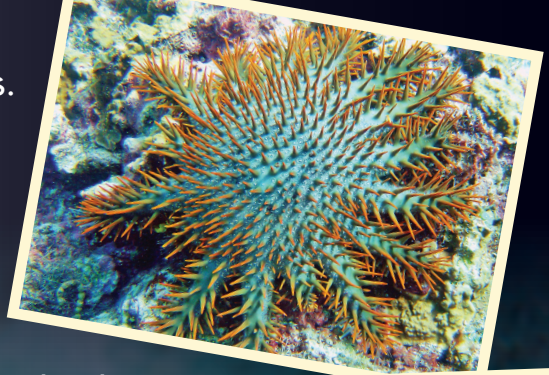
SUPER DIFFERENT

Check out all these beautiful sea stars. As you can see, sea stars have a lot of different looks. They come in a rainbow of colors, including blue, red, orange, purple, pink, and even white. They can also be covered with speckles, stripes, or fancy patterns.

LOOK AT
ALL THE BRIGHT
COLORS!



Most sea stars have long, pointed arms. But some, such as the *pincushion star*, are hardly star-shaped at all. The *crown-of-thorns sea star* is different looking, too. It's covered with long, sharp spines.



crown-of-thorns sea star

Many sea stars have five arms, but some kinds have as many as 40 arms. One kind of sea star even has 50 arms! Full-grown sea stars range in size from smaller than a dime to larger than a trash can lid. There are about 2,000 species of sea stars, and they are found in oceans all over the world.



pincushion star

SUPER TALENTED

Sea stars can walk straight up a rock wall with no trouble at all. They're even able to climb the smooth glass sides of an aquarium without falling. It's all because of their talented *tube feet*. A sea star can have hundreds or even thousands of tube feet along the bottoms of its arms. The feet ooze a sticky glue that lets them really hang on.

close-up of tube feet



Besides using its feet to climb up walls, a sea star also uses its feet to eat. Sometimes sea stars eat dead animals they find on the ocean floor, using their feet to hold on. For other meals, such as a mussel, a sea star has to work harder. Using its sticky tube feet, it slowly pulls the tightly shut shell open.

Once the shell is open, the sea star uses another talent to eat the animal inside. Using its mouth (which is located on the underside of its body), the sea star pushes its stomach right out through its mouth and squeezes it into the opening between the top and bottom shells. Then it covers the mussel inside with its stomach and digests it.

