

The Sand Dollar

Sand dollars live under water burrowed in the sand. Often times only a small edge of the shell can be seen above the sand. A living sand dollar has a soft brown spiny covering. These short little spines help the sea creature to move along the sand and burrow in it. When a sand dollar dies the brown furry spines drop off.

There are many dangers that can interfere with the sand dollars safety. Ocean storms can be dangerous for sand dollars. The winds and rain stir up the ocean waters. This disturbs the sand dollars that are nestled just under the sand. The sand dollar also has many predators. It is a meal to many different fish. The fish swallow the sand dollar hard shell and all. The starfish are also predators to the sand dollar. They don't eat the shell only the soft parts.

You might want to know what sand dollars eat. They eat algae, and very small plants and animals found on the ocean floors.

The sand dollar is a hard shell, which is called a test. Many find the sand dollar a beautiful and interesting shell and collect them from the ocean beaches. If you collect sand dollars make sure you are only taking dead ones. You can tell the difference because live sand dollars are covered with tiny spines. Dead sand dollars have lost their spines and are more fragile.

Collectors use their sand dollars for many things. They often start by cleaning their sand dollars. This is done by soaking them in a bleach and water solution. They must be rinsed and dried before you can harden them. You can harden a sand dollar by applying a glue and water solution with a brush. Sand Dollar Hardener can also be purchased and applied with a brush. They can be painted, used to make different crafts, or just displayed as they are.

Legend of the Sand Dollar

It is said that the sand dollar tells the story of Jesus through the religious symbols that appear on the top and bottom of the shell.

On the top of the shell in the center are the markings of an Easter Lily. In the center of the lily is the five-pointed star of Bethlehem. Around the outer edge of the lily are five holes (4 smaller ones, and 1 large hole in the center). The four smaller holes represent the nails in Jesus's hands and feet when he was on the cross. The larger hole represents the spear wound in his side.

The bottom of the shell has the marking of a Christmas poinsettia. If the shell is broken open you will find five of the sand dollar's teeth. They resemble white doves. You can see why many people find the sand dollar to be a lovely and fascinating shell.



Test Your Thinking Skills

1. Which of the headings below would be best for paragraph two?

- A. The Ocean World
- B. What Sand Dollars Eat
- C. Threats to the Sand Dollar

2. Which of the following is NOT true about sand dollars?

- A. starfish eat sand dollars
- B. sand dollars live on the beach
- C. live sand dollars are covered with tiny spines
- D. sand dollars eat algae

3. Read the sentence below from the passage.

*This disturbs the sand dollars that are **nestled** just under the sand.*

What does the word **nestled** mean in this sentence?

- A. walking on the sand
- B. partly hidden under the sand
- C. buried far under the sand
- D. on top of the sand

4. Write 3 things you learned from the article about sand dollars. Please use complete sentences.

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Answers may vary
