

## Epifauna Benthic Organisms of the Northern Bering and Chukchi Seas

### Vocabulary

1. **Epifauna:** animals living on the surface of the seabed or a riverbed or attached to submerged objects or aquatic animals or plants.
2. **Benthic:** The **benthic** zone is one of the ecological regions of a body of water. It comprises the bottom—such as the ocean floor or the bottom of a lake—the sediment surface, and some sub-surface layers. Organisms living in this zone—that is, on or in the bottom of the body of water—are called benthos.

### ECHINODERMS

*Ophiura sp.* – Common name: Brittle star



Photo Credit: The Marine Life Information Network

*Leptasterias sp.* – Common Name: Six-Rayed Star



Photo Credit: marinespecies.org

*Leptychaster anomalus* – Common Name: Pentagonal Sand Star



Photo Credit: jaxshells.org

*Gorgonocephalus sp.* – Common Name: Basket Star



Photo Credit: deepseacru.org

*Evasterias sp.* – Common Names Include: Mottled Star, Giant Star, and Western Star. (You do NOT need to distinguish between them.)



Photo Credit: jaxshells.org

**Other Echinoderms you may see:**

- *Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis* – The Green Sea Urchin
- *Echinarachnius parma* – The Sand Dollar

**CNIDARIAN**

*Gersemia rubiformis* – Common Name: Sea Raspberry



Photo Credit: arcodiv.org

**Other Cnidarians that you might see**

- **Anemones** (*Urticina crassicornis* or *Stomphia sp.* but you DO NOT need to distinguish between them)

**BIVALVES**

*Serripes sp.* and similar species – Common Name: Clams



Photo Credit: arcodive.org

## GASTROPODS

**Buccinids** – Common Name: Snails



Photo Credit: berkeley.edu

## ARTHROPODS

***Chionoecetes opilio***- Common Name: Alaska Snow Crab



Photo Credit: NOAA

\*\*If you don't recognize the crab in the video, it could be one of the following:

- Toad Crab (*Hyas coarctatus*)
- Helmet crab (*Telmessus cheiragonus*)
- Red king crab (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*)
- Blue king crab (*P. platypus*)

## **FISH**

For any fish that you observe, use the NOAA website on fish and sharks of Alaska to identify the species.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/fish-sharks>

\*\*REMEMBER: You need to use the drop-down menu on this website to indicate that you want the Alaska Region and then filter the results. Otherwise, you will be going through A LOT of fish!