

# Wild Families



## Superb Sea Slugs

VNPA ACTIVITY SHEET

### Discover a miniature world bursting with colour

SEA SLUGS ARE TINY COLOURFUL CRITTERS THAT LIVE IN THE OCEAN



**1** Sea Slugs are actually ocean dwelling snails that have lost their shells.



**2** They usually can't see very well and find their way around by using special noses (rhinophores) to taste and smell chemicals in the water.



**3** They breathe through gills that stick out of their body. Some can even breathe through their skin.



**5** Sea slugs can be all kinds of shapes and sizes - from smaller than the eye can see to over half a metre long.



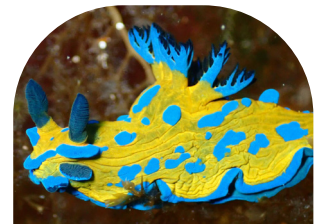
**4** There aren't separate male and female slugs - a single sea slug is both male and female.



**6** They can be bright and colourful, to warn off predators, or dull and camouflaged, to hide from predators. They can be smooth and flat or have a body full of cerrata (which look like tentacles).



**8** There are over 4700 different types of sea slugs in the world.



**9** Sea slugs don't live very long - depending on the type of slug, they live for only a few weeks up to a year.



**7** Sea slugs eat a wide range of food like soft corals, seaweed, anemones, sponges, sea squirts, small invertebrates and even other sea slugs.



### Threats to sea slugs

Climate change and human development in shallow coastal waters are impacting the places where sea slugs live.



### What you can do to help

Be a sea slug sleuth! When you find a sea slug, take a photo and upload your sighting to the iNaturalist App. This will help scientists and land managers learn more about sea slugs, and help protect them. Learn all about sea slugs and tell your friends.

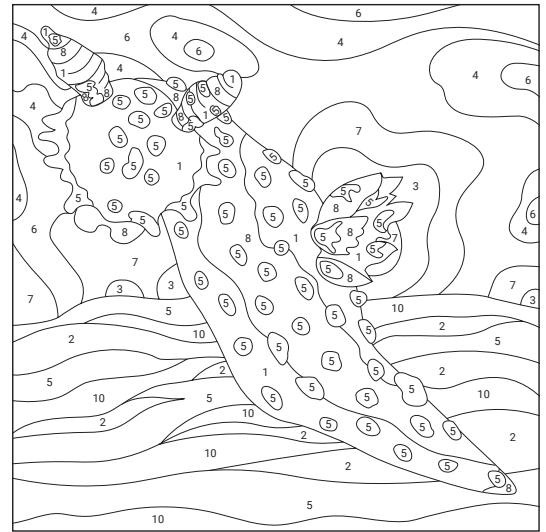
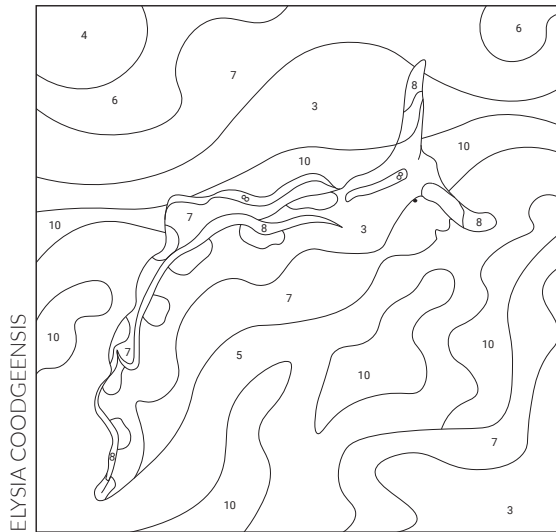
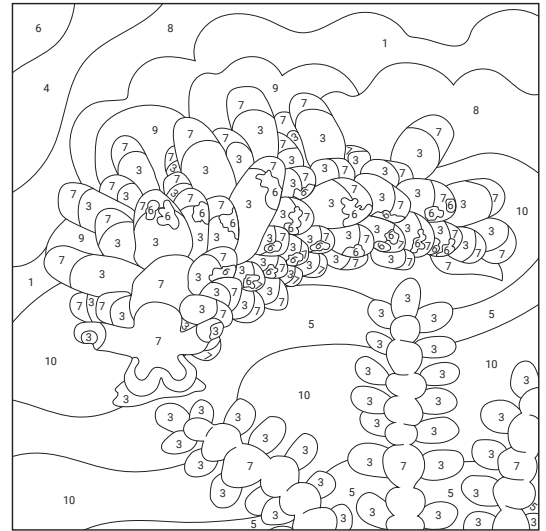
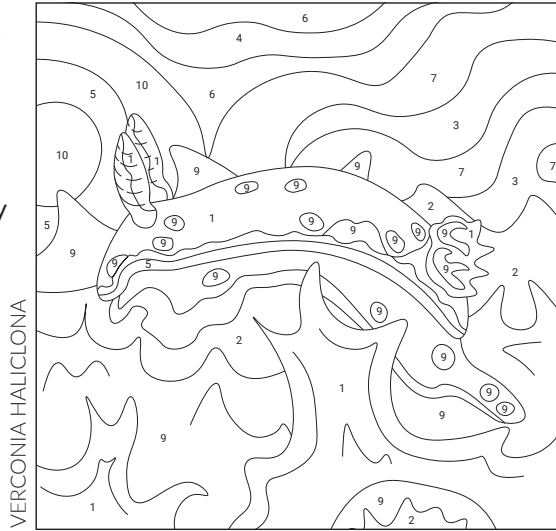
# Colour me sluggy!

Many sea slugs get their colours from the food they eat, which helps them blend in and hide from predators.

Some sea slugs are solar powered – they can steal green energy-producing pigment from the seaweed they eat.

Use the number guide to colour in these slugs:

- 1 Pink
- 2 Brown
- 3 Light green
- 4 Dark blue
- 5 Yellow
- 6 Light blue
- 7 Dark green
- 8 Purple
- 9 Red
- 10 Orange



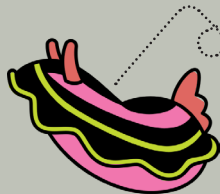
## Sea slug searching

Sea slugs are super fun to search for and they look amazing! You can search for sea slugs just by getting ankle deep in rock pools, you don't even need to go snorkelling (although this is also a great way to find them).

Find a spot next to the ocean that has some different features, like rocks and seaweed. You could try under the bridge at San Remo, Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary at Flinders, Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary at Beaumaris or Point Danger at Torquay. Or choose your own adventure!

### Safe sea slug searching

Remember, when you're searching, always keep your hands where you can see them, there are animals that can bite and sting in the water.



Go searching just before the tide is lowest, it's the best time to search for sea slugs near the shore.



Bring some gumbots or old shoes you can get wet, that way you'll be able to walk around in the water to have a good look.

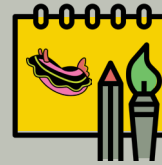


Some sea slugs can be really tiny, so make sure to bend down and look very closely.

Sea slugs don't like the sunlight. Search for them in cooler, shadier spots.

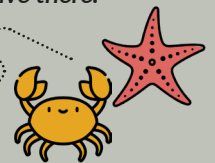


Look closely on different types of seaweed and see what you can find.



Pick a spot you think a sea slug would like. Stop and watch closely for a while. Do you notice anything small, moving around? Draw the different types of sea slugs you think might live there.

List all the other cool animals that you find – did you see any fish, sea stars or crabs?



If at first you don't succeed, try again! Sometimes sea slugs can be tricky to find, even for expert sea slug sleuths.

Download all Wild Families activity sheets  
[vnpa.org.au/wild-families](http://vnpa.org.au/wild-families)



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