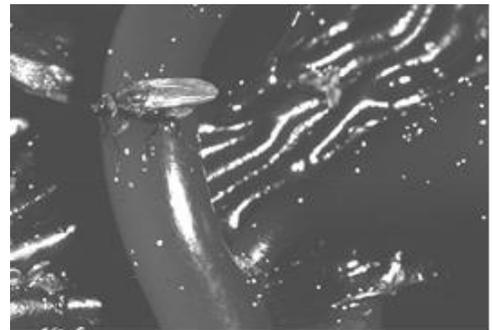
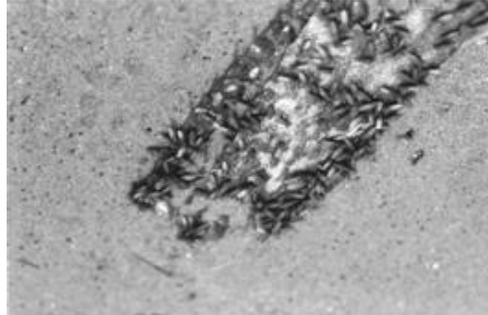


## Common Sandy Beach Inhabitants

### Kelp Flies (Arthropods; Insects; *Coelopa* sp.)

Often found swarming around a pile of seaweed that has drifted onto the beach, kelp flies are insects that feed on rotting seaweed.



### Beach Hoppers (Arthropods; Crustaceans; Amphipods; *Orchestia* sp.)

Beach hoppers, important scavengers in the sandy beach habitat, feed on rotting seaweed. They will dry out if exposed to too much sun and heat, so beach hoppers are often found in the damp sand underneath seaweed piles. If you move or gently kick a pile of rotting seaweed, you will often see beach hoppers “hop” out from underneath.

Although they are sometimes called “sand fleas”, beach hoppers are not insects, and they do not bite humans. Beach hoppers are a type of crustacean called an **Amphipod**. Amphipods are related to shrimp, and like shrimp they are laterally flattened. This means that their bodies appear to be pushed in from the sides, and when viewed from above they appear very thin.



**“Sand Fleas” – more appropriately called Beach Pillbugs**  
(Arthropods; Crustaceans; Isopods; *Tylos* sp.)

Beach pillbugs are scavengers that can be found in the sand toward the ocean side of the berm crest. Though they often dig in the sand, they can be found on the surface of the sand, but they do not “hop” as the beach hoppers do.

Beach pillbugs are a type of crustacean called an **Isopod**. Terrestrial pillbugs (also called “roly polies”) are also isopods, so they too are not insects, but are crustaceans. Isopods have a body that is flattened from top to bottom, so they appear flat when viewed from the side.



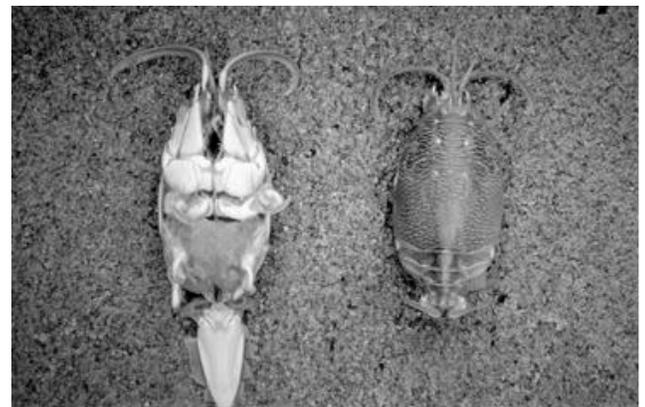
**Blood worms** (Annelids; *Euzonus* sp.)

Blood worms, abundant in the sandy beach habitat, are usually found buried in the sand in the mid intertidal area. They are red worms (this is how they get their name), and their bodies can stretch out to almost a foot in length and contract down to 2 cm. They will usually contract in size when removed from the sand. In the sand, they feed on microscopic organisms, processing sand much like earthworms process soil. The variation in color observed in these worms is largely due to whether they have recently ingested dark or light sand grains.



**Sand crabs** (Crustaceans; Decapods, *Emerita analoga*)

Sand crabs are often seen burying themselves in the shifting sands of the sandy beach. They dig into the sand backwards so that their heads and antennae are exposed for feeding. Their antennae strain plankton from the water. Sand crabs are Decapods (meaning “ten feet”), a diverse group of crustaceans that includes crabs, shrimp, and lobsters.



**Clam worms/Carnivorous worms**  
(Annelids; *Nephtys* sp. or *Nereis* sp.)

Carnivorous worms are uncommon on the sandy beach. They are easily distinguished from blood worms because they are not red. They are beige or greenish in color.

