



At the lower shore we find serrated wrack, *Fucus serratus* which is unmistakable with its saw-like teeth along the edges of the fronds. A home for many sea creatures.



There are a number of *Ulva* species which are not easy to separate without a microscope but gut weed, *Ulva intestinalis* is the commonest, appearing in vast 'sheets' in suitable habitat.



Finally into the subtidal where we have the very common oarweed, *Laminaria digitata*. It occupies a zone just offshore before we encounter the very large kelps.



Also floating in this zone is thongweed, *Himanthalia elongata*. It has a two-stage morphology: the thalli are in the form of 'buttons' from which, reproductive fronds grow.



Outer Hebrides Biological Recording

Photographs © Chris Johnson

## Some Common Seaweeds of the Rocky Shore



Seaweeds are marine algae which live along the coast and in shallow seas. They are divided into groups according to the colour of their pigments (red, brown and green), but like all plants they contain the green pigment chlorophyll.

Each species is adapted to a different habitat and you will find different kinds of seaweed at the top and bottom of the shore, rock pools and on exposed and sheltered coasts.

An essential part of the marine habitat, they provide food and shelter for a vast array of sea creatures. So while you are looking at seaweeds you will discover a whole new world of marine life.







In the middle shore we encounter bladder wrack, *Fucus vesiculosus*. A very common species usually with twin bladders, one on either side of the midrib, (there is a subspecies without bladders, not covered in this leaflet).



Often found with bladder wrack, and down into the lower shore, is egg or knotted wrack, *Ascophyllum nodosum*. A large brown seaweed that can attain two metres in length and can appear in floating masses. It has single air bladders along its midrib.



Starting at the upper shore where the tides only occasionally reach we have channelled wrack, *Pelvetia canaliculata*. The fronds are curled giving a channel like appearance. It can grow to 15 cms but more often 10 cms.



Just below channelled wrack we have spiralled wrack, *Fucus spiralis* with a distinct twist to the fronds. Neither of these species has air bladders.



At this position in the shore it's worth checking the rock pools. Quite a number of species can be found here with coral weed, *Corallina officinalis* being a striking example. Quite brittle to the touch as the fronds are calcareous. A red alga that often has white tips, having been bleached by the sun.



Sea oak, *Halidrys siliquosa* can be found here too, in larger pools, and also on the lower shore.



The red seaweed, carrageen, *Chondrus crispus* also occurs here. The growth form is dichotomous.



This common alga is harvested commercially for use in the food and pharmaceutical industries.