

# Creature Feature

## MISSION: Mollusks



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**MOLLUSKS** are a group of **INVERTEBRATES**, or animals without backbones. They have soft, squishy bodies and most have shells. There are almost 100,000 species of mollusks. Snails, bivalves such as mussels, and even the octopus are all part of this group! Today, we will take a closer look at **GASTROPODS** in particular. The word “gastropod” comes from a Greek word that means “stomach foot” and includes snails and slugs.

Join naturalist Daryn in this [Mollusk video](#) to learn more about two of the most common animals on the rocky shore, the dog whelk and the periwinkle. These two snails have some **ADAPTATIONS** in common - a hard, sturdy shell, a strong foot, and the ability to stay safe while out of the water if they have to.



What does a dog whelk like to eat?

What do snails use their operculums for?

The thick shells of dog whelks and periwinkles are one of their best defenses and follow a spiral growth pattern. In mathematics these spirals are known as *Fibonacci Spirals*.



This dog whelk larvae has started growing its shell!  
Can you see the spiral?



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