

## Zhemchug and Pribilof Canyon Life



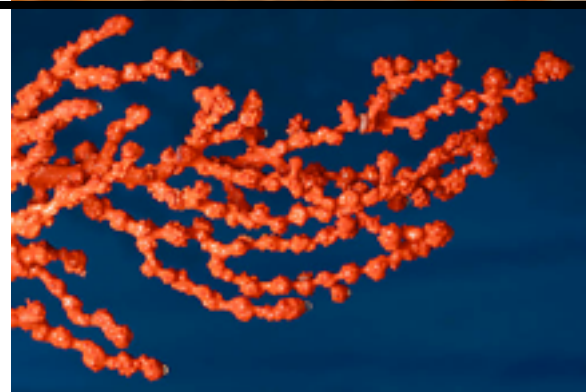
### Cup Corals or Stony Corals

These “true corals” are the same kind of coral known to flourish in the tropics. Unlike their tropical counterparts, however, Alaska's cup corals are small and solitary, and do not form reefs. They may form cup- or cone-shaped skeletons, each containing a single polyp.



### Bamboo Coral

Bamboo corals are among the deepest of the deep sea corals. They thrive in cold, dark water from 700 m. to two miles deep. They are bioluminescent. They are among the “trees” of the ocean bottom, often growing in stands up to one meter tall on barren seamount plains that provide shelter, places for settlement, and feeding perches for reef fish and other invertebrates.



### Bubble Gum Coral at 1020'

Deep-sea corals like bubble gum coral are closely related to sea anemones and sea pens. The bubble gum corals are fan-shaped and tree-like, growing to be 8 m. wide and 2.5 – 3 m. tall. They are found attached to gravel especially in channels and canyons at depths greater than 300 m. The pink bubble-gum coral is the largest seafloor invertebrate in the world. Bubble gum corals are octocorals, the most diverse, least-well-known and the most difficult to identify in Alaskan waters.



### Gorgonian Corals

Gorgonian corals are also octocorals. They have horny or calcareous branching skeletons and grow in a treelike form. Alaska corals don't form reefs like tropical corals, in the true sense, but rather form extensive gardens. Alaska corals can grow in deep water because they don't need light to grow. They acquire all the nutrients they need directly from the water column. Tropical corals can only live in shallow water and depend on symbiotic algae that require sunlight to photosynthesize.



### **Brittle Star at 1032'**

Brittle stars are a close relative of sea stars. Brittle stars are close relatives of sea stars. The arms are highly flexible and snakelike. They have openings at the base of each side of their arms which they use to take in water for oxygen and to shed eggs or sperm into the sea. They eat plankton, detritus, mollusks, and worms.



### **Basket Star on Barrel Sponge**

Basket stars are a type of brittle star. They have long, branched curly arms with hooks that catch their plankton prey. In shallow water they only open up at night to feed. They are found in areas with strong currents that bring them their food.



### **Bigmouth Sculpin**

Bigmouth sculpin are found in deeper waters between about 300-900 feet in the Bering Sea. They feed on shrimp and juvenile walleye pollock and are eaten by halibut and sablefish.



### **Octopus at 1132'**

Octopuses can live in deep waters because their cells can be compressed under high pressure without bursting. This allows them to escape from a trap that has a hole no larger than their beak, the jaws that are the only hard part of their body.



### **Moon Jelly at 30'**

Moon jellies have translucent, moonlike circular bells. Like all jellies, they are large plankton that drift in the currents, but they can also pulse their bell to swim horizontally and keep themselves at the surface of the water. They spreading their tentacles over the largest possible area and a short, fine fringe (cilia) sweeps smaller plankton toward a mucous layer on the edge of the bell. Prey is stored in pouches until the arms pick it up and begin to digest it.



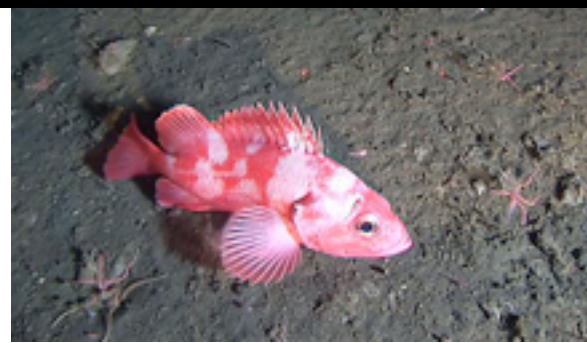
### **Baby Golden King Crab**

Golden king crabs are abundant on seamounts at depths of 200-600 m. The females have large eggs with a large amount of yolk. The young, or larval, crabs feed on the yolk, instead of feeding on plankton like other young crab. They then ride the ocean currents until they finally settle on the ocean floor several months later. As adults, they weigh 5-8 pounds and are smaller than other species of king crabs.



### **Decorator Crab on Sponge**

Decorator crabs camouflage themselves with tiny seaweeds and animals like anemones, sponges and bryozoans. The crab selects pieces of seaweed and small animals from its habitat and fastens them to hooked setae (Velcro-like bristles) on the back of its shell. Crabs that have grown large enough to defend themselves don't decorate their backs; however, plants and animals settle there without help, take hold and grow.



### **Rockfish**

Several rockfish species live in deep waters on the edge of the continental shelf. They use rocky habitats for shelter. Rockfish have a type of swim bladder that uses a special gas-producing and absorbing gland to maintain their buoyancy at different depths in the water. Rockfish are slow-going and extremely long-lived. Unlike most fish that lay eggs, the females give birth to live young.