

Coasts

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1 What is a coast?

2 A coast is a place where the sea meets the land. In some places, the coast is a sloping beach. In other places, the land ends with high walls of rock. These are called cliffs.

4 Rock cliffs

5 Wind, rain and waves change the shape of the coast all the time. Crashing waves slowly make the bottom of rocky cliffs crumble. Waves wear away soft rock, making holes. These become caves or arches.

8 Sand and dunes

9 Over millions of years, waves wear soft rocks into tiny grains of sand. Some sandy beaches are made of crushed sea shells.

11 Some coasts are always windy. The wind dries the sand and blows it behind the beach. The sand piles up into soft hills called dunes. Marram grass is planted on sand dunes. Its long roots hold the sand in place.

14 Sea birds and animals

15 Many sea birds nest and rest together on the ledges of rocky cliffs. Here, they and their eggs are safe from hungry rats, snakes and larger birds.

17 Seals and turtles are both born on beaches. They swim out to sea soon after they are born. Seals come back on land to rest. They lie in groups on rocks and sandbanks.

19 Harbours and ports

20 Before there were aeroplanes, people travelled across seas by ship. They landed at harbours in deep, sheltered bays, where their ships were safe from rough waves.

22 Today, ships mainly carry heavy goods. These travel in metal containers. The containers are loaded and unloaded at big ports.

24 Protecting coasts

25 Some people use the sea as a dustbin. This is dangerous for sea life. The waste often washes up onto the shore. Most waste is plastic. It can float for thousands of miles before reaching land.

27 People must look after coasts, so that these are not spoiled forever.