

**INTERTIDAL LIMPETS OF THE FIDALGO BAY AND CHERRY POINT
AQUATIC RESERVES***

Michael Kyte, Spring 2015

1.

- a.** Shell margins nearly parallel, aperture elongated; color mostly dark brown, with light markings; length up to 1.2 cm; on leaves of native eelgrass, *Zostera marina*.

***Lottia alveus* (*L. parallela*)** Eelgrass Limpet



- b.** Shell margins curving outward, outline oval.-----2

2.

- a.** Shell apex near or at one end; prominent radial ribs; length up to 3 cm; zone: upper to mid ITZ with littorine snails, *Cthamalus dalli* (Brown Barnacle), and *Balanus glandula* (Acorn Barnacle).

Lottia digitalis
Ribbed Limpet



- b.** Apex not near or at one end; without prominent ribs; if ribs present, low, broad.-----3

3.

- a.** Height usually not more than one-third width, relatively flat when compared to other limpets; color brownish, olive-green, or greenish, usually spotted, streaked, or checkered with white; length sometimes exceeding 5 cm; common in mid- and low ITZ.

Tectura scutum Plate Limpet



- b.** Height usually more than one-third the width, relatively higher than *T. scutum*; color mostly uniformly brown, olive, or gray, but sometimes with a few white spots; length sometimes exceeding 3 cm.-----4

Note: Published identification keys to limpets (e.g., *Marine Invertebrates of the Pacific Northwest* by Eugene Kozloff) rely heavily on interior markings of shells from which the animal has been removed. The following key assumes that only live animals resting on or attached to substrate will be examined and only the exterior of shells will be visible.

4.

- a. Apex at the end of the first one-third, often inclined slightly forward; shell appears “inflated” or bulging, smooth without ribs or wavy margin; color greenish brown, or olive-green with tan or white speckles, usually speckled and banded brown; length up to about 5 cm; largest limpet in mid to upper ITZ.

Tectura persona Mask Limpet



- b. Apex approximately central, not inclined forward; shell with low, broad ribs and wavy margin; color generally dark and blotchy, may be checkered with white; up to about 4 cm; mostly in mid- and low ITZ.

Lottia pelta Shield Limpet



Side-by-side comparison of four limpet species

