



# WORKSHEET

for middle and upper grade levels

Most of these questions can be answered by observing our animals closely and reading the information screens. Some questions require a bit of prior knowledge and critical thinking. It is up to the educators whether pupils should complete the entire worksheet or only select portions.

**Please follow the zoo rules! Students must remain within view of the adult(s) supervising them!**

Have fun looking for our animals, observing them, and figuring out the worksheet answers!

We are always trying to improve our worksheets and would be very happy to receive your feedback!  
Please send us a message at [guides@haus-des-meeres.at](mailto:guides@haus-des-meeres.at)

## Ground floor: Atlantic Tunnel

The Atlantic Tunnel is the largest tank in the Haus des Meeres with 500,000 litres of water and is home to our cownose rays, eagle rays, and pelagic stingrays. These three species belong to the scientific order *Myliobatiformes* and all possess a venomous sting or barb, which they use in defence. **Look closely at our rays and describe or draw where exactly this barb is located.** Clue: the long, thin tail is not the sting!



## 2nd Floor: Piranhas

There are numerous dark tales about these famous fish, however, piranhas are ecologically very important animals! They are the sanitation police of the Amazon!

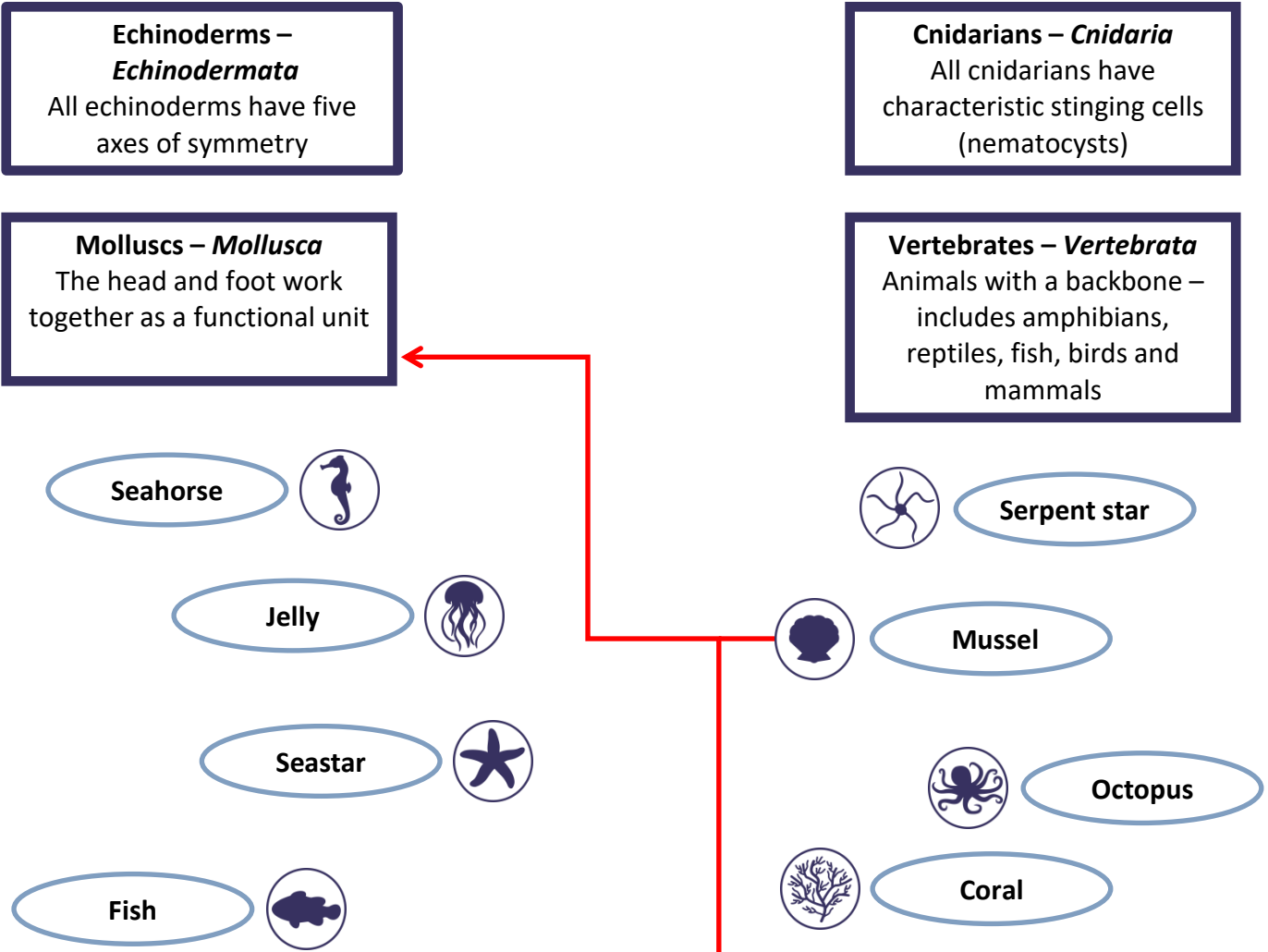
**Read the text on the display board thoroughly and try to determine what their main task as sanitation police is.**



# 2nd Floor: Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Sea lies between Europe, Africa and Asia and is 5267 metres below sea level at its deepest. It covers an area of approx. 2.5 million km<sup>2</sup> and is home to more than 700 species of fish and 35 shark species.

You can find the eight Mediterranean residents below on the second floor. **Match the animals to their taxonomic groups (bold)** and to where you found them in the aquarium.



### 3rd Floor: Ribbon morays

Because morays do not have paired fins or an operculum (gill cover), they are often mistaken for snakes although they are, in fact, bony fish. Individual ribbon morays express three different striking coloration variants. **What does the colour of a ribbon moray tell us about it?**



### 3rd Floor: Anemone and clownfish symbiosis

The word symbiosis comes from the Ancient Greek and means “living together.” A symbiosis is a relationship between two different species in which both benefit from the arrangement. Anemones are cnidarians and collect their prey using their stinging cells (nematocysts). Clownfish (also known as anemonefish) form a symbiotic relationship with sea anemones, where the fish find protection from enemies by hiding between the anemone’s stinging tentacles. The clownfish have a mucus layer covering their bodies, which protects them from the anemone’s nematocysts. Predators, however, are sensitive to the stinging cells. The anemone benefits from this relationship too, as the clownfish protect it from potential predators, including butterflyfish.

**The orange clownfish is not the only anemonefish on this floor. Which other anemonefish species can you find here on the 3rd floor?**

## 4th Floor: Seahorses

Seahorses are very interesting fish, even if they don't look exactly the way you would expect a fish to look. Their tail fins have evolved into a curly tail. Watch how the seahorses swim. **For what do they use their tails for?**



Seahorses have another unique trait: pregnant seahorses are always male! The females lay eggs and the males carry them until 100 to 200 baby seahorses are born. Read the display boards and take a closer look at the seahorses. **Which feature helps you tell males and females apart?**

## 6th Floor: Native fish

Sturgeons are the most threatened family of animals in the world. One reason for this is that their migration routes are blocked, and they can no longer travel during mating season to their spawning grounds to lay eggs. Only one native sturgeon species can be found in Austria – what is this species called and how far (in km) must they travel to spawn?

## 7th Floor: 360° Shark tank

While observing the sharks in this tank, you may notice that the blacktip reef sharks are always moving. This species must swim constantly to keep water flowing through their gill slits; otherwise, they are unable to breathe. **Does this apply to all shark species? Can you think of any shark species that can breathe while lying on the bottom?**

Tip: Take a look at our Pacific Eye (also on 7th floor).

If you look closely at the sharks, you may get the impression that they look quite soft and smooth to the touch. In fact, shark skin is quite rough, as it is covered in tooth-like scales called dermal denticles, or placoid scales. Because of these scales, sharks can save energy, as the texture of their skin reduces drag in the water, making their swimming movements more efficient.

## 7th Floor: Gila monsters

Gila monsters live in arid habitats in the American Southwest. Their main food source is eggs, though they also eat small prey.

**They are...**

☐ ... venomous and inject the venom into their prey by:

☐ ... non-venomous and catch prey by:



## 8th Floor: Chameleon

Chameleons are very slow-moving animals, but they eat very fast-moving insects. To catch their prey, they use their tongues, which can be as long as the chameleon's entire body.

**Describe in your own words how they catch insects.**



## 8th Floor: Grotto

Cave tetras are fish that are adapted perfectly to life in caves.

**As such, they have:**

☐ No eyes → They don't need them. They can sense their environment with their lateral line organ.

☐ Two eyes → This way they can see a bit, especially if it gets lighter.

☐ Six eyes → With more eyes they can even see in darkness.

## 9th Floor: Komodo dragons

Komodo dragons can reach a length of up to 3 metres and are the largest living lizards in the world. There are a lot of stories and rumors surrounding them, but which ones are true?

**Mark the correct answers:**

- ☐ They can smell prey 4 km away.
- ☐ They can hold their breath for an hour.
- ☐ Female Komodo dragons need males to reproduce.
- ☐ They can weigh up to 200 kg.
- ☐ They are venomous.
- ☐ They can eat up to 80% of their body weight in food at one time.
- ☐ Their tongues have three tips.
- ☐ In the wild they live on every tropical island.



## 10th Floor: Caribbean hammerhead shark tank

Like skates and rays, hammerhead sharks are cartilaginous fish. They are remarkable for their unique head shape, the function of which is still not fully understood. It is believed, that because of the surface area of their broad noses, they receive more sensory input and can swim sharper curves. There have also been observations of hammerhead sharks holding prey down on the seafloor with their heads.

**Besides the hammerhead sharks, there is another cartilaginous fish in this tank. Which species is it?**

Cartilage has different features than bone. **What advantages would an animal gain from a cartilaginous skeleton rather than a bony skeleton?**

**Super! You did it!**

**Which animal in the Haus des Meeres did you like the best?**  
**My favorite animal at the Haus des Meeres is:** \_\_\_\_\_