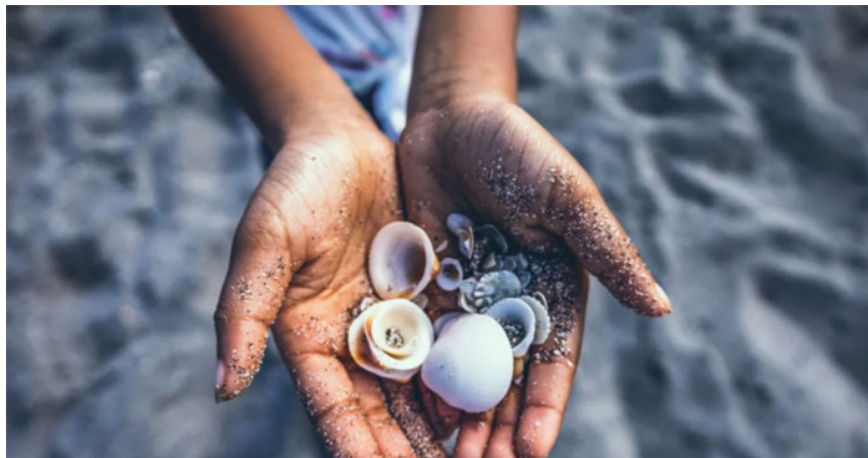


# It is not recommended to take seashells from the beach and why

In coastal ecosystems, seashells are an important link. Seashells not only help stabilize beaches but also provide birds with nesting material, providing shelter or mounting surfaces for many marine species such as algae, seagrass, sponges and crustaceans.

Seashells are one of the popular gifts on beach trips. However, science shows why you should not take seashells home from the beach.

Recently, IFL Science cited a 2014 study showing that scientists investigated removing seashells from beaches and concluded that this action caused "significant damage". " for many species that rely on seashells for their survival.



In coastal ecosystems, seashells are an important link. Seashells not only help stabilize beaches but also provide birds with nesting material, providing shelter or mounting surfaces for many marine species such as algae, seagrass, sponges and crustaceans. In addition, seashells are a source of calcium carbonate, which can dissolve in seawater and be recycled back into the ocean.

According to the study's lead author Michal Kowalewski, who is also a paleontologist at the Florida Museum, seashells are important because they serve many functions in natural ecosystems.

Mollusc shells (dead snail shells found on mudflats and rocky shores) are important to hermit crabs, said Geerat Vermeij, a mollusk shell expert and renowned geology professor at the University of California Davis. , providing their main resource. According to him, removing the shells will also eliminate the habitat of these hermit crabs.

From 1978 to 1981 and from 2008 to 2010, researchers conducted several months-long surveys on Llargà Beach, an hour by car from Barcelona in Spain. The results showed that between the two research periods, the number of seashells decreased by up to 60%.

Scientists found that the number of seashells is higher in winter when fewer tourists visit the beach. Therefore, they suspect the disappearance of the seashells is most likely due to the influx of tourists to the area.

According to Kowalewski, human activities that many consider harmless, such as scavenging and collecting seashells, can play an important role in changing habitats.

In 1949, Britain passed the Coastal Protection Act prohibiting the taking of any natural material from public beaches. In the United States, it is illegal to collect live seashells of certain protected species.

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