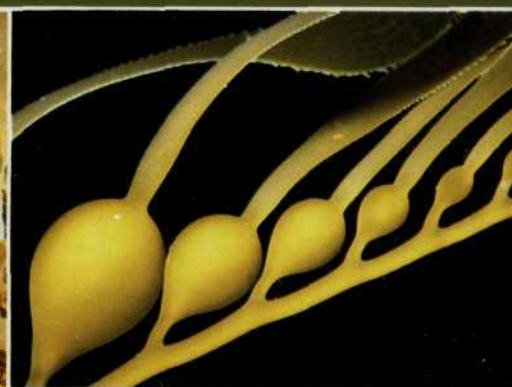




UNDERSEA

FORESTS

If you stand on a cliff and peer out to sea in certain places, you might notice large tangles of plants at the surface. You'd actually be looking at the "treetops" in a forest of giant kelp. Giant kelp, a kind of seaweed, grows in cool coastal waters in scattered areas of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. Anchored firmly to the ocean floor, stalks of kelp may grow as tall as 20-story buildings. The kelp forests on this and the following pages rise from the ocean floor off the coast of California. Read on to find out more about these underwater forests and the life they support.



GAS-FILLED SACS called *bladders* (above) act as floats for the seaweed called *giant kelp*. These plant parts keep the kelp upright, exposed to the sun.

KELP'S ENEMY. A sea urchin nibbles at a *holdfast*, which anchors the kelp plant to the ocean floor. The urchin can eat through a holdfast, setting the plant adrift to die.

GRACEFUL STALKS OF GIANT KELP bend with the tide off the coast of California (left). *Blacksmith fish* swim among the kelp plants, looking for food. Giant kelp grows near coastlines in cool waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans.