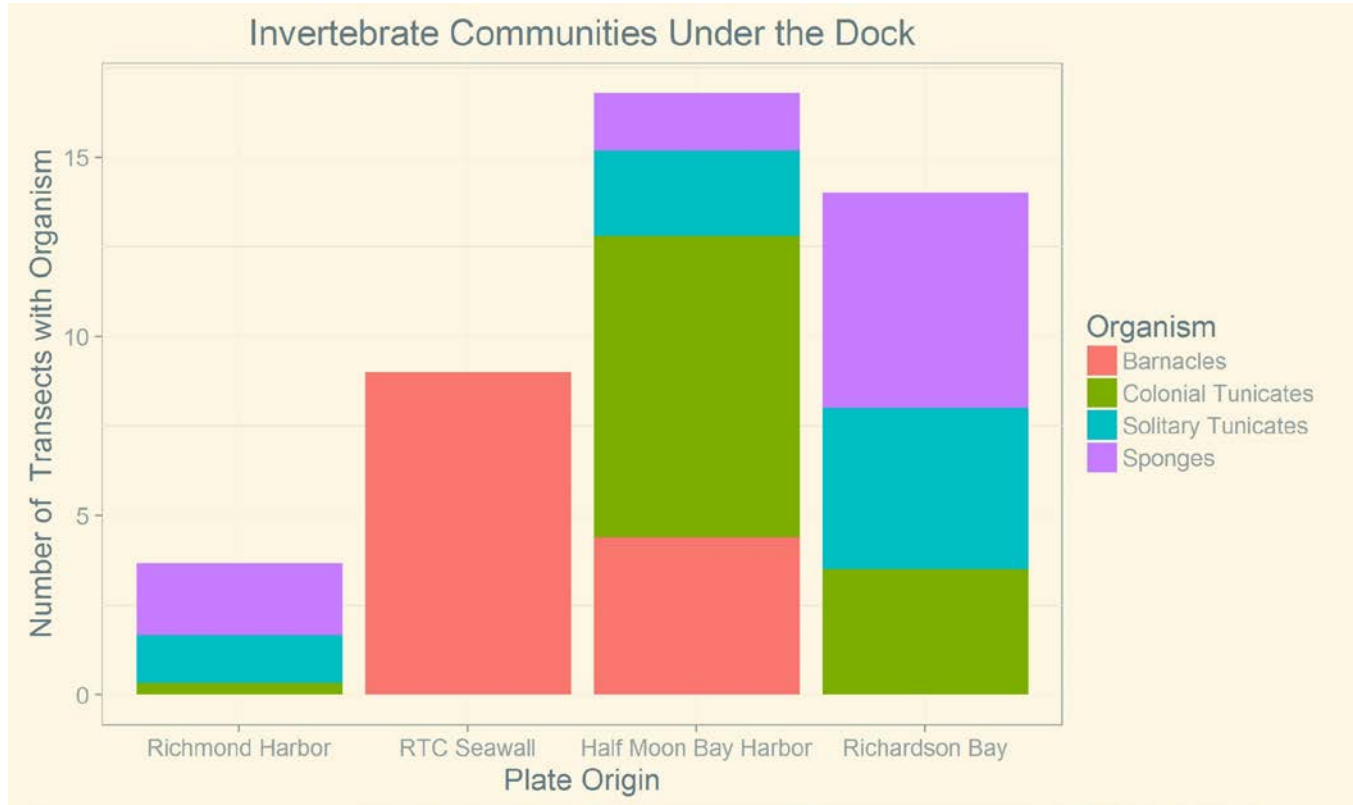


How can we identify and quantify biodiversity?

More a demonstration of sampling techniques than a controlled experiment, to measure patterns of abundance in different species with different abundances. Visitors also learned about the challenges of measuring distributions and abundance of organisms that are colonial vs solitary, dense vs infrequent, different sizes and age classes.



Transects=sampling squares. Plate=setling plate used to collect attached organisms in a given location.

Settling plates from each location were in the water for different lengths of time, which is a confounding variable. Can you draw any conclusions about distribution and abundance from these four plates? What would you need to do to be able to come up with them? (Hint: think about repetition and controls).

Visitors also learned that identification of organisms by physical (morphological) characteristics may not always work, that genetic analysis is sometimes needed to tell species apart.