Horseshoe Crab fea ures

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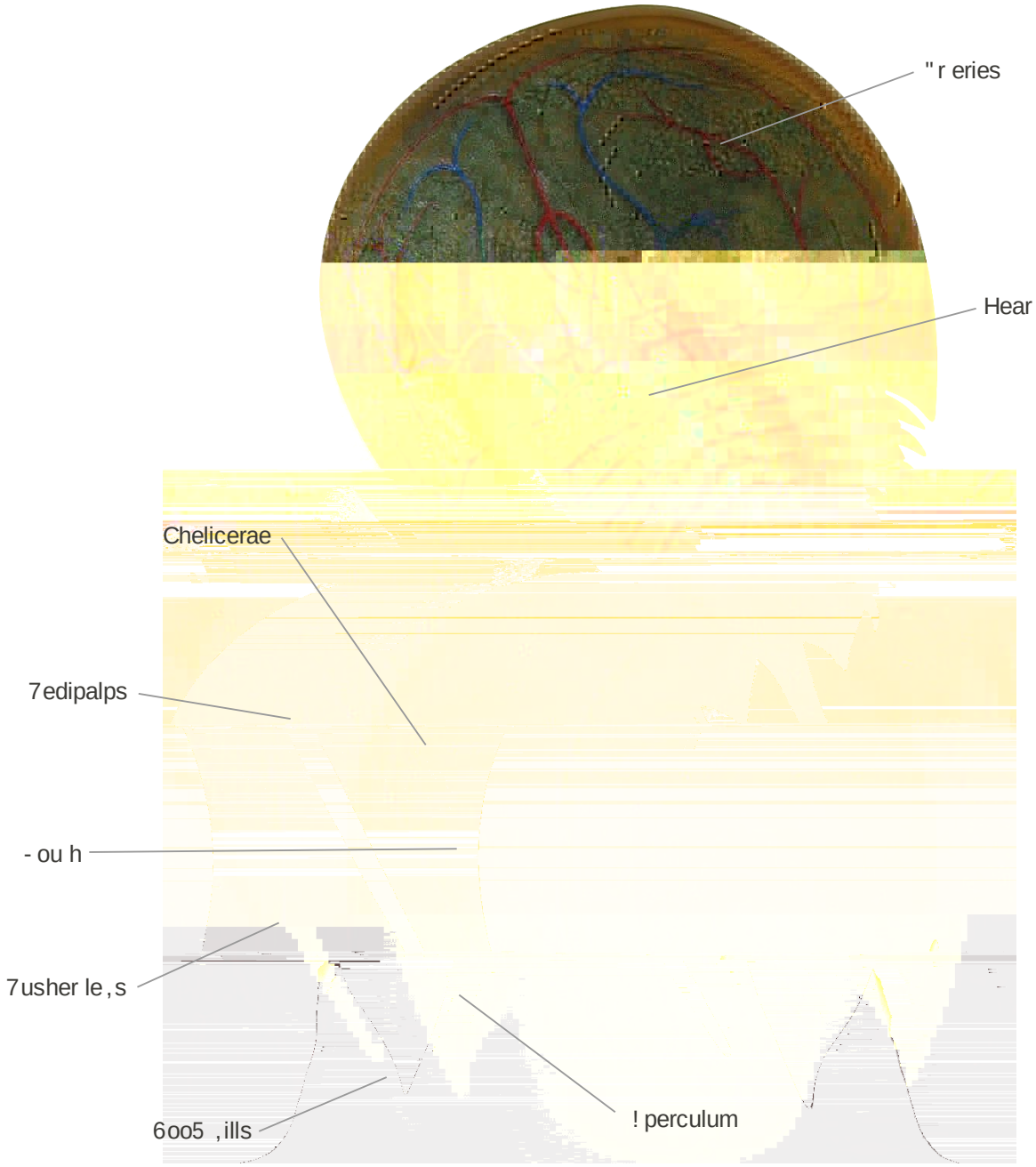

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Hooray for Horseshoe Crabs

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When is a crab not a crab? Di0e other crabs, horseshoe crabs are arthropods. ' ut so are spiders and scorpions. "hey all have e3os0eletons, a body divided into segments, and legs with 6oints. ' ut horseshoe crabs are not true crabs. "hey don:t belong to the same class, 4rustacea, as the blue crab and other crabs. "rue crabs have antennae, 6aws, and only five pairs of legs.) orseshoe crabs don:t have antennae or 6aws and have si3 pairs of legs.) orseshoe crabs are in a class of their own9 5erastomata, which means ;mouth surrounded by legs.

) orseshoe crab fossils, similar in form to the ones you see in estuaries today, are found in roc0s over ,A- million years old. 1n this e3ercise, you are going to ta0e a closer loo0 at the anatomy of this ancient creature.

*. (ead the ' ac0ground information sheet about horseshoe crab anatomy.

+.

F?. Why are horseshoe crabs considered to be arthropods? Why are they in the class 5erastomata?

F,. Where does the horseshoe crab begin its life and how does it grow?

6ac5 , round: Horseshoe Crab "na omy

"he horseshoe crab:s body is divided into three sections. "he front section is called the . "he middle section is called the . And the horseshoe crab:s tail is called the . While the telson may loo0 dangerous, the crab mainly uses it for digging and to help turn itself bac0 over if it gets flipped over on the beach. "he telson is very fragile.) orseshoe crabs should never be pic0ed up by their tails.

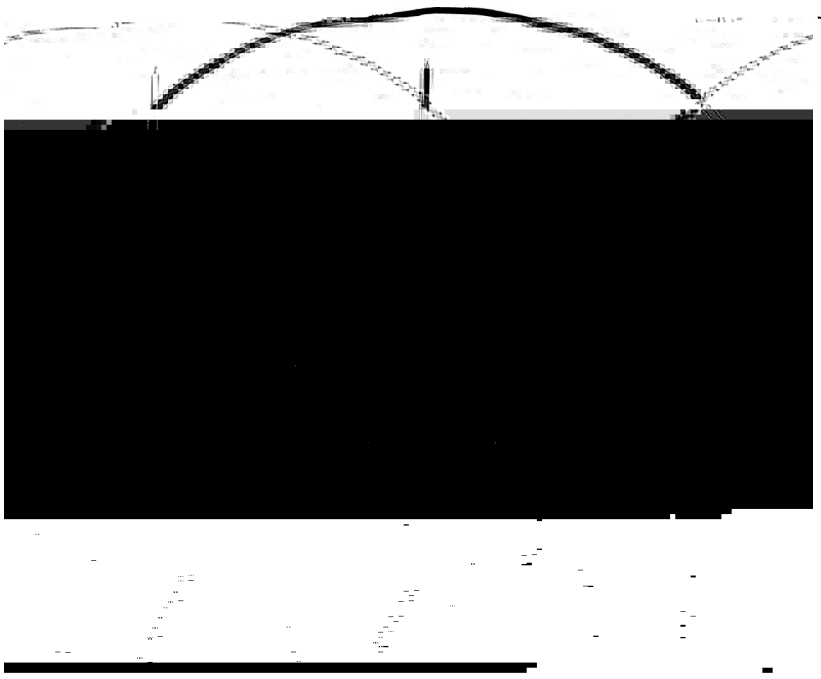
) orseshoe crabs are benthic animals, meaning that they normally live along the seafloor or bottom of an estuary:s bay or lagoon.) orseshoe crabs move underwater along the bottom or out of the water along the flat beach by using their five pairs of 6ointed legs. "he fifth pair of larger

horseshoe crab outgrows its shell, called a carapace. "he crab molts, leaving its old shell behind and growing a new, larger shell. A horseshoe crab will molt *@ to *G times over a period of about *- years until it reaches adulthood.)orseshoe crabs can live to be about +- years old if they do not get eaten by predators, get stranded on the beach, become in6ured, or get a disease.

Horseshoe Crab: Ex ernal fea ures # op view$

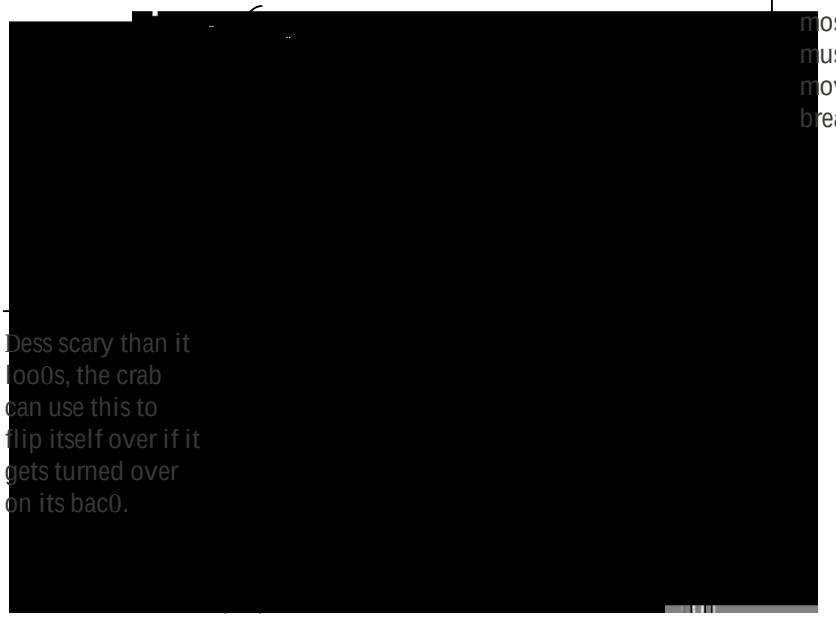
"ight

"hese might be the most obvious, but the horseshoe crab has A additional eye on its top, + on its bottom, plus light



"he IheadI section of the horseshoe crab contains much of the crabIs nervous and digestive system, plus the muscles to move its legs.

"he horseshoe crabIs middle section mostly contains the muscles needed to move its tail and to breathe.



Dess scary than it loo0s, the crab can use this to flip itself over if it gets turned over on its bac0.

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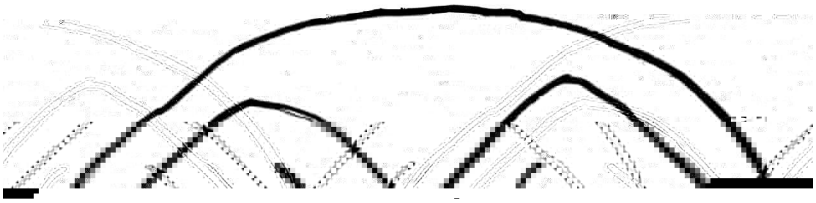
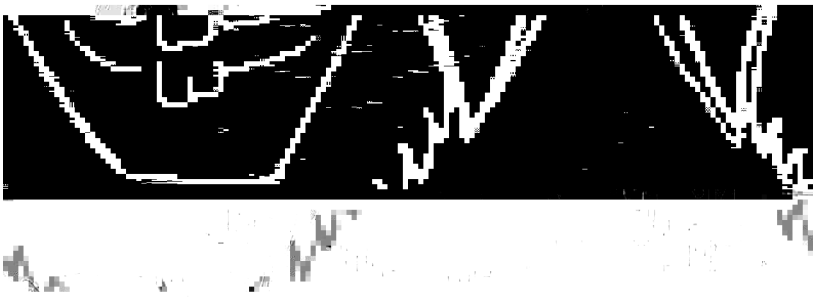


"his first pair of wal0ing legs is also used by the male during spawning.

"he start of the crab's



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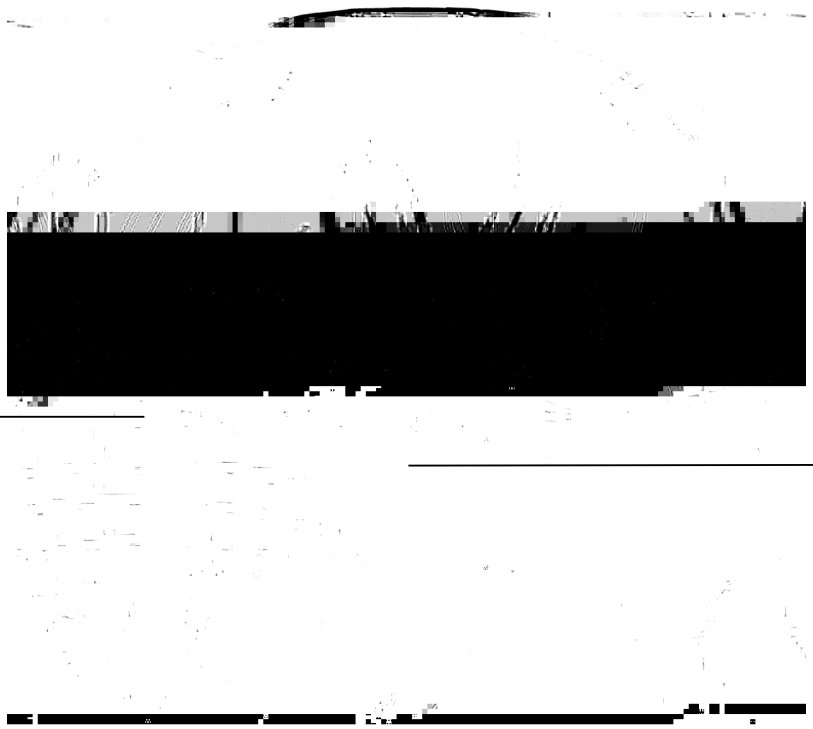

"he horseshoe crab's blood leaves through these tubes, eventually going into the boo0 gills to get o3ygen before returning to the heart.

"his circulatory organ e3tends almost the entire length of the horseshoe crab's body and beat ?+ times per minute.

Horseshoe Crab: ⁼n ernal fea ures #bo om view$