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The Crab's Enemies

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Crabs have many enemies. Fish and birds eat them. Men eat some kinds of crabs. Crabs eat each other. With so many enemies, crabs would soon be all gone, if they did not lay so many eggs. Mrs. Crab, each year, lays more eggs than you could count.

Crabs do not always have hard shells. When they first come from the egg they have long tails, four legs, and no claws. The crab's body then has a thin cover. He can swim well.

A little pink crab, named Pea Crab, goes to live in the shell of the oyster. The oyster does not seem to mind it. You may see this little crab in your oyster soup. He turns orange color when he is cooked. Pinna, or Pea Crab has a very soft shell.

The Spider Crab has a brown shell, rough like sand. Little thorns grow all over it. This Spider Crab cuts off fine sea-weed with her little sharp claws, and hangs it like ribbons on these thorns or hooks.

Then she looks like a little green grove! Who can tell why she does that? Is it to hide?

Do you see the wide hind feet of the crab in this picture? Those are his paddles, or oars. They are his swimming feet. His shell is wide and light. He can float on the waves like a boat. He goes far out on the sea.



Some crabs can dig into the sand very fast. They go in backwards. They slip out of sight like a flash. Or, they leave the tips of their heads and their eye-pegs out, to look about. Sand-crabs do this.

Their shells are a pale brown or sand color. Their shells are wide and round behind, and come to a point in the front.

Their heads are in the narrow part of the shell. Their shells are rough.

They are swift runners.

Some hide in holes in the rocks. Some are sand-color, and their color protects them.

When they are afraid, they lie flat on the sand, and it is hard to see them. Some birds have long, thin bills, with which to pick Mr. Crab out of his sand house.

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