SHRIMP

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

COMMON NAME:	shrimp
KINGDOM:	Animalia
PHYLUM:	Arthropoda
SUBPHYLUM:	Crustacea
CLASS:	Malacostraca
ORDER:	Decapodia
FAMILY:	More than 30 families
GENUS SPECIES:	

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FAST FACTS

DESCRIPTION:	Shrimp have a cylindrical body that is laterally compressed. They have a well developed abdomen region and slender legs. Some shrimp have chelipeds. Shrimp have a thin, flexible exoskeleton. They posses stalked eyes on their head that are sometimes covered by a head shield.
SIZE:	To 23 cm (9.1 in.)
LOCOMOTION:	Shrimp use their appendages for walking or burrowing. The well developed abdomen region of shrimp allows them to use a form of temporary “burst” swimming as an escape reaction. By rapidly contracting the lower abdominal muscles, the shrimp quickly shoots backwards, using the tail fan for propulsion.
DIET:	Plankton and detritus
FEEDING:	Scavengers and detritivores
REPRODUCTION:	Shrimp are either male or female. Female shrimp can only be fertilized when they are newly molted. Some shrimp deposit their

	eggs in the water; Others brood the eggs in a pouch protected by their pleopods.
RESPIRATION:	Gills are feathery expansions of the body wall and are located on the side of thoracic segments. The number of gills varies between species.
LIFE SPAN:	1 to 5 years
RANGE:	Temperate and tropical seas worldwide; from the intertidal zone to the deep sea.
HABITAT:	Benthic among algae, sea grasses, stones, and shells. Also within crevices of coral or rock. Some burrow in sand or mud. A few species are pelagic to depths of 1000 m (3280 ft.). Freshwater species occur in estuaries, rivers, and lakes.

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FUN FACTS

1. The order decapoda contains about one-fourth of the species of crustaceans. All decapods share the following features:
    - The first three pairs of thoracic appendages are modified as maxillipeds, leaving five pairs of legs.
    - The first pair of legs is modified as large claws, or chelipeds.
    - Most decapods are adapted for crawling. The legs are heavy and the pleopods are used for reproductive functions rather than swimming, as seen in shrimp.
    - The body is somewhat flattened and the exoskeleton is rigid.

2. Many shrimp are “cleaning” shrimps. They remove ectoparasites and other unwanted materials from reef fishes. Species of *Periclimenes* make their homes in the tentacles of sea anemones and signal to nearby fishes to approach them to be cleaned. The shrimp will actually climb on the fish and even insert their chelipeds into a fishes gills.

3. Snapping shrimp are found in tropical and temperate waters and can grow to be 5 cm (2 in.) long. One of their chelipeds can grow to be almost half the size of their body. A snapping shrimp quickly closes this large claw, producing a loud “snap” to stun prey, deter predators, or communicate with others. One species of snapping shrimp closes its enlarged claw fast enough to form a bubble. The loud snapping sound created actually comes from the popping of the bubble. Researchers have found that sometimes when bubbles pop, light is produced due to the high temperature and pressure inside the bubble. The sound produced by large aggregations of snapping shrimp can interfere with the sonar of naval vessels and the sounds of whales.

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ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

Shrimp are economically important to humans, mainly as a source of food. Species of the genus *Penaeus* are among the most commercially important shrimps throughout the world. In the U.S., shrimp fisheries are located along the southeastern Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico. Shrimp are caught by trawling.

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