

### **Ten Interesting Facts About Lobsters!**

1. Though you may only recognize the American lobster, which lives along the North Atlantic coastline from Labrador to New Jersey, there are a total of 30 species of lobster living in all oceans around the world! They can be found anywhere from the shoreline to off the continental shelf. They prefer rocky and sandy environments where they can find crevices and make burrows.
2. Some species of lobster can live longer than 50 years in the wild! They grow constantly throughout their lives, so if you see a really big lobster, it may be very old! According to Guinness World Records, the largest lobster ever caught was off the coast of Nova Scotia in 1977, weighing over 44lbs! There is also some historical evidence of a 50 lbs lobster caught in Maine in 1926. Both of these behemoths were thought to be over 100 years old!
3. Though lobster dishes tend to be some of the most expensive dishes on restaurant menus these days, they have not always been a staple of New England fine dining. During the 1600s and 1700s, lobster was more commonly ground up to be used as fertilizer or fishing bait. Servants were fed lobster because they were so abundant, washing ashore piled on top of each other! It was not until the 1880s that lobsters were brought from where they were primarily harvested on the Maine coast to cities like New York and Boston, and they quickly became a delicacy.
4. The anatomy of a lobster is quite curious. It has teeth inside its stomach to grind up food, and its brain is in its throat. Its pincers on its eight small walking legs are covered in small bristles that serve as taste buds, so a lobster tastes with its feet before bringing food to its mouth.
5. One thing that makes lobsters similar to humans in their body structure is that they usually favor one claw. Just as we can be left or right-handed, lobsters can be left or right-clawed!
6. Lobsters are omnivores, feeding on fish, mollusks, worms, and plants. They also are known to exhibit cannibalism in desperation. When you see lobsters packed in close quarters at a lobster pound, all of their claws are banded shut to prevent them from eating each other.
7. Lobsters possess an exoskeleton composed of calcium that they will molt up to 25 times in the first 5 years of their lives. Their frequency of molting slows down as they get older, but they continue to molt throughout their lives.

8. Lobsters walk fairly slowly when moving across the seafloor. However, when threatened, they escape by powerfully curling and uncurling their abdomen. This allows them to swim backwards at speeds of up to 11 mph!
9. Lobsters have, in part, been protected from overharvesting due to the inefficiency of lobster traps. Lobster traps are baited cages with a mesh entrance that is easy to enter and, though more difficult to exit, is still very possible to do so. Some lobsters have even defended traps from other lobsters, because they are a source of food.
10. Though listed as a species of least concern on the IUCN red list, lobsters depend on a fragile ecological balance in order to survive! Instances of excretory calcinosis, a disease that kills lobsters when calcium mineralizes onto the gills and antennae, have been linked to increases in seawater temperatures. In order to continue enjoying these unique creatures that are a key part of New England's identity, it is important to act against climate change and the resulting rises in ocean temperatures.

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### **Ten Interesting Facts About Jonah Crabs!**

1. Jonah crabs can live in intertidal areas, where there is only water present during higher tides, as well as half a mile deep in the ocean! They are found all along the Atlantic coast, from Florida to Maine.
2. It may not look like it at first glance, but Jonah crabs have tails! They are folded underneath their bodies, and serve as a good way to tell if a crab is male or female. Males have triangular tails, while females have spade-shaped tails.
3. Another cool anatomical feature of crabs is that they have nine teeth on the edges of each eye!
4. Jonah crabs have a hard exoskeleton to protect their bodies inside. The main section of a crab's exoskeleton is called the **carapace**, which is used as a metric of a crab's overall size. Jonah crabs typically grow to be 4-5 inches wide, but some have been measured to have a carapace width of more than 8 inches!
5. Jonah crabs feast on a variety of other marine organisms, including arthropods, mussels, snails, and even some species of algae!
6. Jonah crabs migrate to areas during different times of the year to satisfy their internal preferences of temperature regulation. They move offshore in the fall and winter, but move back inshore during the warmer months. Females are typically found at shallow depths, as they prefer these conditions for spawning and molting.
7. Crabs do not begin their lives as crabs at all! They hatch from their eggs as tiny larvae and they float in the water column from summer into the fall, the first few months of their lives. In the fall, the larvae molt for the first time into small crabs and settle down into the sand. At this stage, the juvenile crabs are less than half an inch wide!
8. Males are typically larger than females, and the bigger they are, the deeper they prefer to reside. As a result, males end up being targeted for harvest much more than females.

9. Like lobsters, Jonah crabs have not always been a popular food in the United States. Jonah crabs were only harvested as bycatch in lobster traps until the 1980s. At this time, other crabs became more scarce as their stocks were depleted and Jonah crabs became much more popular.
10. In 1990, Rhode Island led the coastal region between Maine and Virginia by landing 400 metric tons of Jonah crabs. In 2016, Massachusetts landed 4,595 metric tons, and the entire region brought in a total of 6800 metric tons! That's a lot of crab cakes!

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