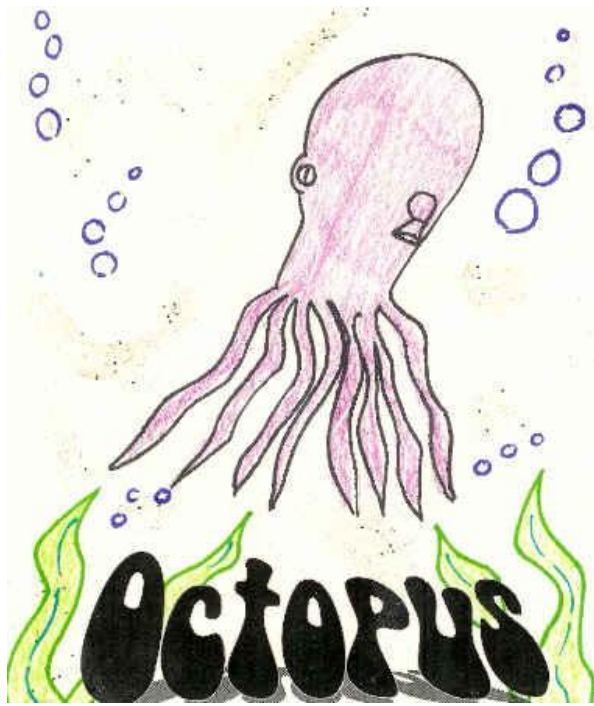


Octopus

by

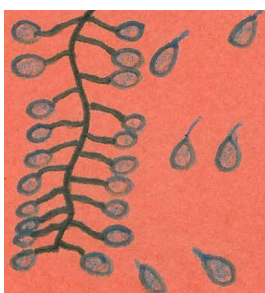
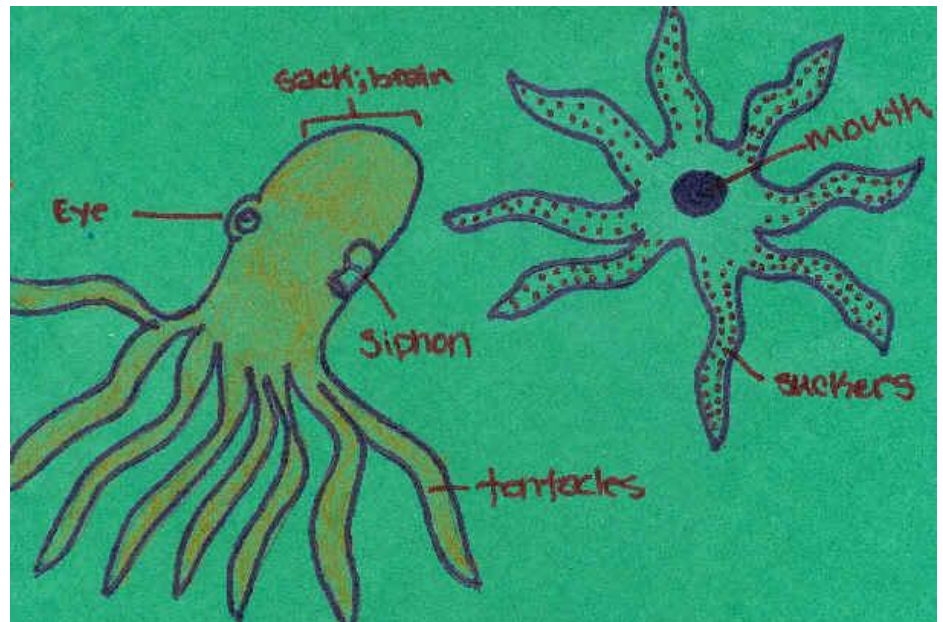
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Classification; Octopuses belong to a large group of animals called mollusks, which mean that it is soft-bodied without a backbone. Most mollusks have a hard shell that acts as a protective covering like our skulls. Octopus shells are much smaller than other mollusks and are located inside their soft bodies.
Habitat: Octopuses live in every ocean, but not in freshwater like lakes or rivers. Most of the 200 species of octopuses live in reefs and rocks in fairly shallow water along the coast. The environment

provides the octopus with many cracks and crevices for hiding, hunting, and making their homes, which are called dens. Other types of octopuses love on sandy seafloors, deep, deep in the ocean. Those living in the deep generally have softer bodies than those living in shallow reefs. No matter where the octopus lives, in the deep or in the shallow waters, the surrounding water must be rich in food.

Size: There are over 200 species of octopuses varying in size and weight and color. Octopuses can be as small as a few centimeters and weigh mere ounces or as large as 25 feet and weigh 200 pounds. These are known as giant octopuses. These creatures are so mysterious and hidden and have such short life spans, 3-5 years that much of what is known is based on only a few species. Male and female octopuses are generally the same size, but there are a few species in which the females are larger.

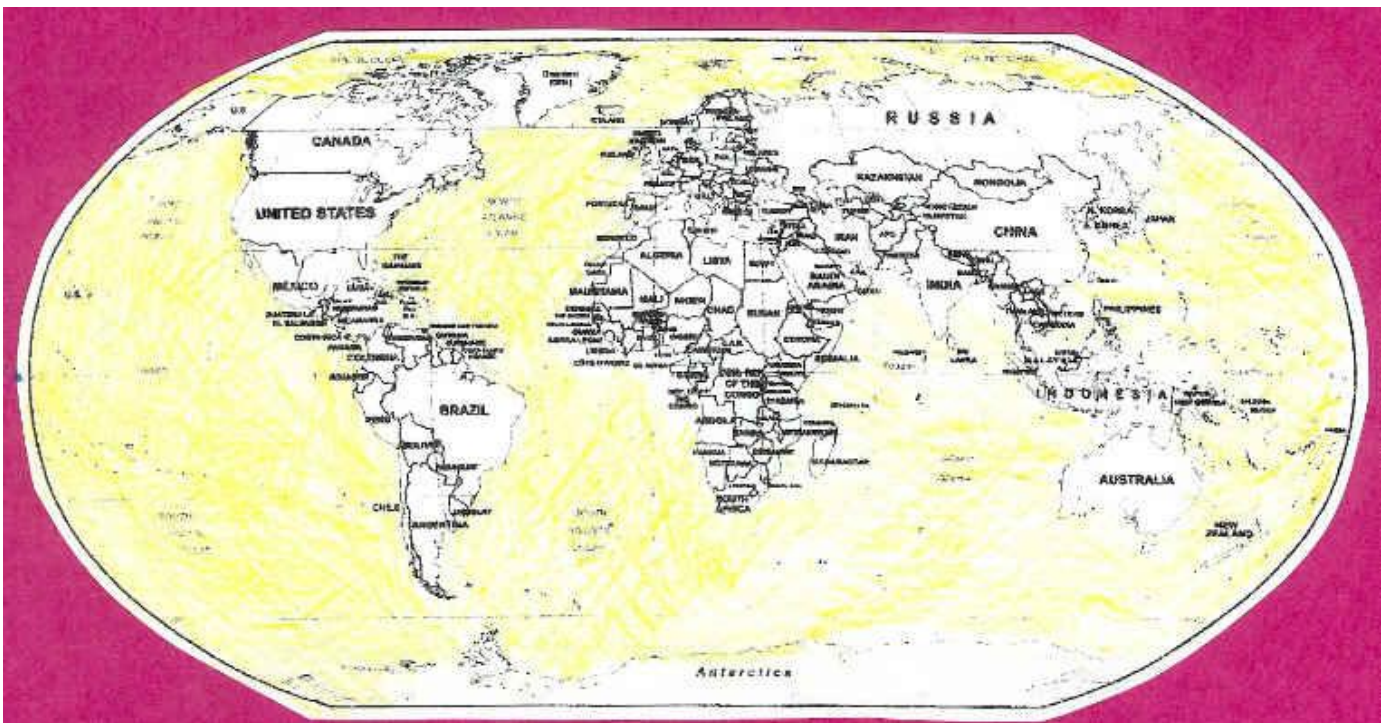


Food: An octopus has a BIG appetite. Crabs are its favorite food. It also likes lobster, clams, and other shellfish. It captures its prey, or food, by hiding and blending into the background and when the prey least expects it, swoosh the octopus reaches out an arm and grabs it. Also, they like to sneak up on the shellfish and sit on



it and suck it up like a vacuum through its mouth, which is located on its underside. Octopuses are also food for bigger fish too. When they are being hunted, instead of fighting, they simply hide or escape. They will camouflage themselves by turning different colors to match their environment, turning green and gray to blend into the rocks and seaweed, or turning black to hide in the shadows. Also, they can spray ink into the water, which smells like an octopus and while their enemy goes after the ink, the octopus escapes.

Young: A girl octopus starts having babies when it is one or two years old. She can lay up to 200,000 eggs in her den. The eggs take four to six weeks to hatch. During this time, the momma octopus guards her eggs so closely that she doesn't even hunt or eat. Once the eggs hatch, the mom's work is done and she dies. How sad. The newborn octopuses are very tiny, the size of fleas. Until they are a few months old, the babies cannot jet or hide in dens. They can only float with the water's current. Most of them get eaten by bigger fish. Few survive and grow up to be very clever like their mom.



5 Interesting Facts:

1. Octopuses can regenerate any of its eight arms. This means that if an arm is cut off by a predator, the octopus simply re-grows a new one.
2. Octopuses have no bones at all.
3. An octopus can change its color to match its environment for protection or to show emotion, turning green, gray, and brown to match rocks and seaweed or turning black to escape an enemy. They can even have spots and stripes. An angry octopus can turn dark red, and a frightened one can turn pale in color.
4. The common octopus has 240 suckers on each arm.
5. Every octopus lives alone until it is time to make babies. When it is time to mate, the male octopus attracts a female octopus by changing colors rapidly and putting on a light show for her.