

# Along the Trail By Ken Legg

Any time we go along the shore, where shale or granite leaves the water's edge, we very soon become aware that many other animals are here, too. One of the most noticeable creatures of this water and rock realm is the shore crab, aptly named because he lives here.

Like headless horses, we see them galloping over the rocks, their bodies high above the surface, on many stilts, and their pincers clicking on the hard runway like miniature shod creatures. The aim of the crab is to put as much distance between himself and the stranger as possible, or, to seek cover.

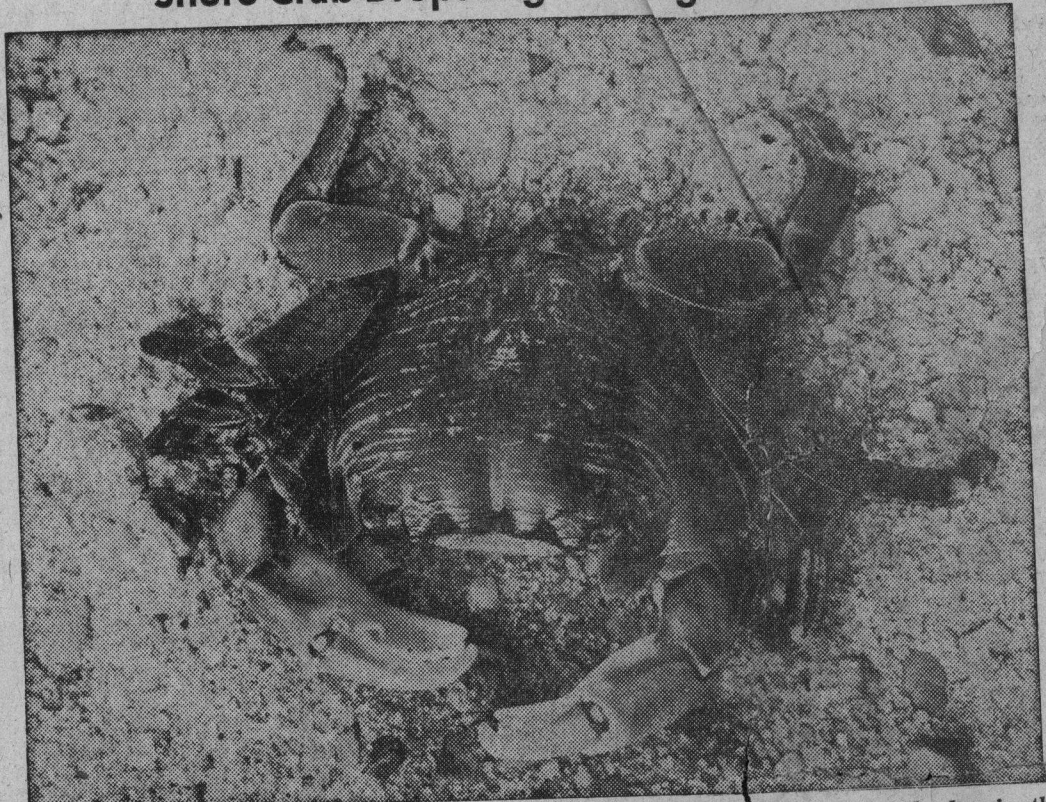
Perhaps we give little thought to the fact that animals of the seashore have many things in common with animals of the land. The crab is familiar with all the avenues of escape. Just as the rabbit must know all the paths into the blackberry path to elude the fox, so the crab tumbles into a pool of water, slips into some crevice in the rocks, or seeks seclusion in the seaweed jungle in order to escape those who pursue him.

Many of the marine creatures, so persistently pursued, have physiological advantages that rabbits, for example, don't have—I mean "the way they are built."

Catch a rabbit by the leg and he's caught; catch a crab by the leg and all you've got is a leg. Joints, easy to break, leave you holding the bag, for life to a crab is more valuable than a leg, and why not, he has five times as many as we do. He has been equipped with built-in tourniquets to retard loss of blood, and immediately a new leg begins to grow. This strange fact is the answer to why we quite often find crabs carrying one large and one small claw. They got in a tight spot once and left one behind; the little one is not as old as the big one.

There are many species of crabs. These vary in size from the pea crab, large as a pea, which lives in the tubes of deceased worms, to the edible

## Shore Crab Drops Leg To Cing To Life



The shore crab pictured above is merely one of the myriad of creatures which live along the water's edge. He

wants nothing more than to be left alone by humans, and if someone does happen to snatch him up by a leg, the shore crab will unjoint it and scuttle

away, leaving the leg in the captor's hand. Then, as time passes, he grows another leg, and life goes on for him.

### LUMBERMAN KILLED

Redding (P).—Tom Buck, 31, a lumber worker, was killed Thursday when hit by an automobile as he was walking along Buckeye road on the outskirts of Redding.

crabs, more than a foot wide across the back.

The shore crab (pachygrapsus) is the one pictured here. There are two genera of shore crabs, the aforementioned, and his "brother," hemigrapsus. I call them the grapsus boys, Hemi and Packy, for if we aren't careful they will grapsus our fingers. (Some scientists will get awfully disgusted with me for this, but I can't always stay strictly stuffy.)

Every time children get to the shore they give crabs a bad time, setting the whole community in an uproar. Cornered, some of these fellows get mad, and if the child tries to lay a finger on the crab's outside skeleton, said finger will probably be nipped, and since it is not equipped with the first-aid system of the crab, may bleed all the way home.

We expect children to play with the animals along the shore, but what I hate is to see people pick vast quantities of crabs and starfish, carry them up on land and leave them to die on the picnic tables or in the parking lots. This is senseless, needless waste and shows our lack of appreciation for the wonders of nature. These are living, sensitive animals sharing the world with us. Our place is the land. They cannot possibly bother us, but we can go into their world, and trouble, mutilate and bring slow death down upon them for the sake of curiosity.

The crab can live out of water. But what's the first thing the amateur collector does? —tosses him into a tomato can filled with fresh water, and it's curtains for the crab. Starfish cannot live long out of water and soon perish when brought ashore.

I have small argument with people who take a resource and put it to some good use. My main dissension is with those who wantonly destroy, either through ignorance, thoughtlessness or sadistic tendency. As one who has cleaned hundreds of dead and dying starfish and crabs from tables, restrooms and parking lots, I say it's time to start educating our youngsters against the killing of these fascinating creatures.

### Three Members Of Family Win \$12,000 In Suit

Joel Johnson, 50, 1350 Harper street, and two members of his family won a judgment of \$12,677.15 Friday before Municipal Judge Gilbert Perry in Watsonville for injuries suffered last February in an accident involving a Brown and Williamson Tobacco corporation truck from San Francisco.

The other plaintiffs were Johnson's son, Robert, 23, of Salinas and his brother, Anton, of Wisconsin.

The three were injured in an accident with the tobacco truck on the Los Gatos highway.

Joel Johnson received \$1803.75; Anton Johnson, \$165; and Robert Johnson, \$10,708.40.

They were represented by Attorneys Ray J. Scott and Robert L. Bennett.

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