



**OYSTER**  
**RECYCLING**



**IT'S HABITAT**  
**FORMING**

Activity Book

# FAST FACTS

## DID YOU KNOW?

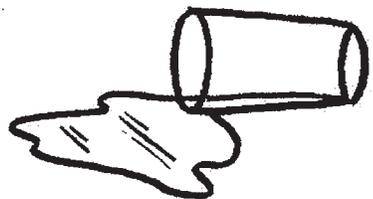
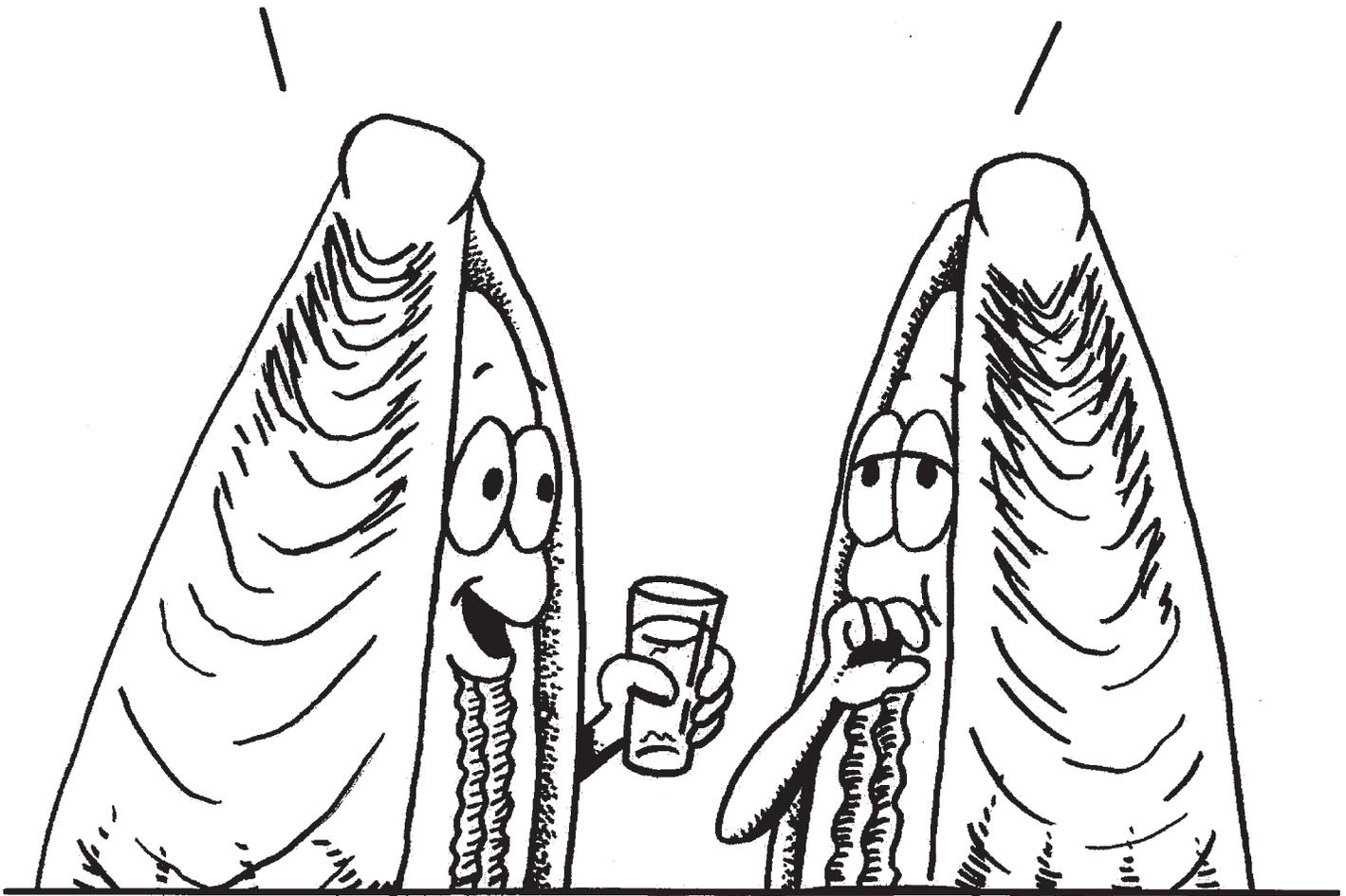
- Oysters can switch between being male and female
- A female oyster can produce over 100 million eggs per year
- Young larval oysters don't have a shell, they swim freely in the water
- After about three weeks, oysters form a shell and cement themselves to a hard substrate
- Over time, reefs are formed by the numerous oyster shells built up into the water
- Oysters in Texas can reach market size (three inches) in 18 months
- Oysters can live up to 20 years



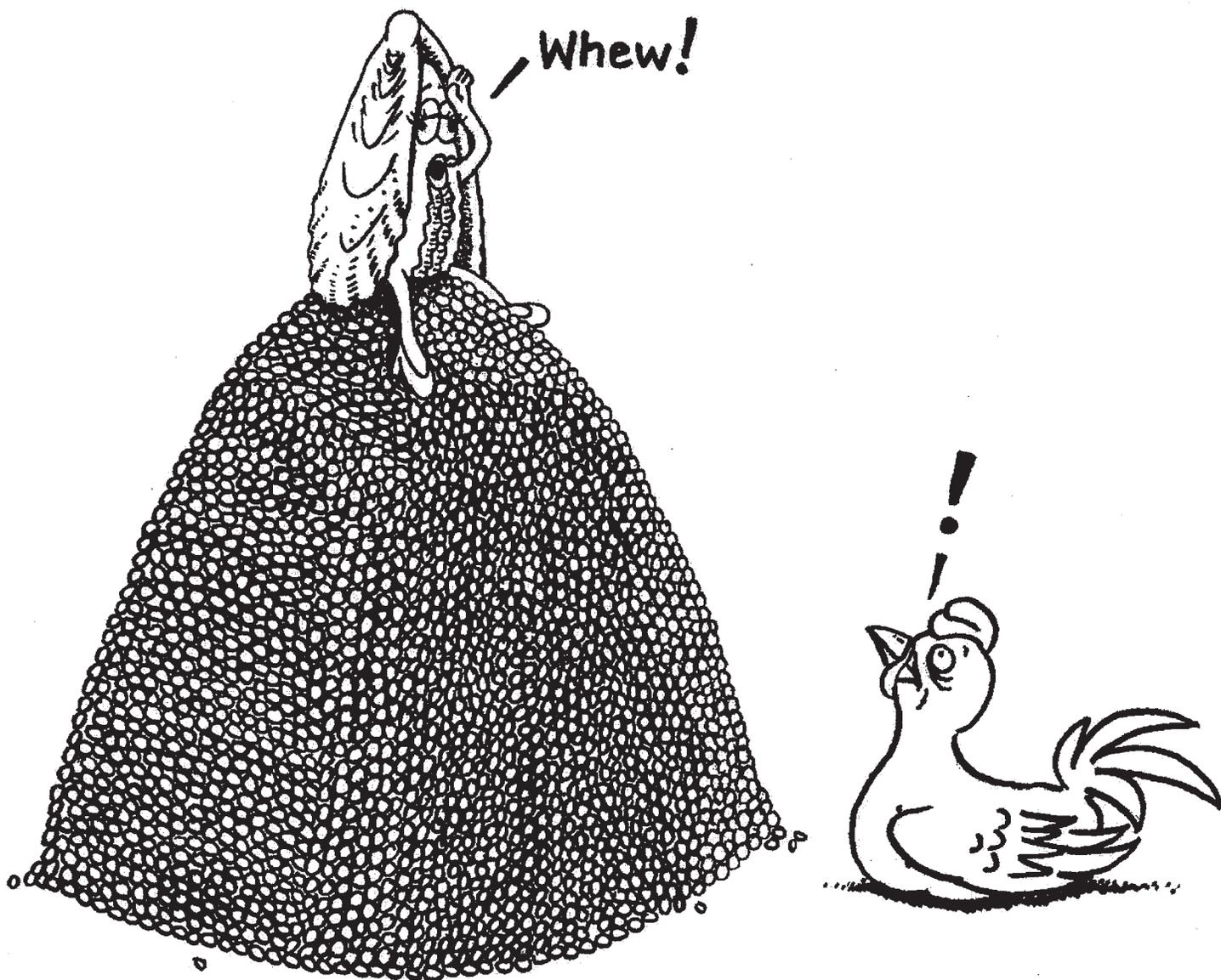
An oyster can change from male to female several times during its life!

More water?

No thanks, I'm full.

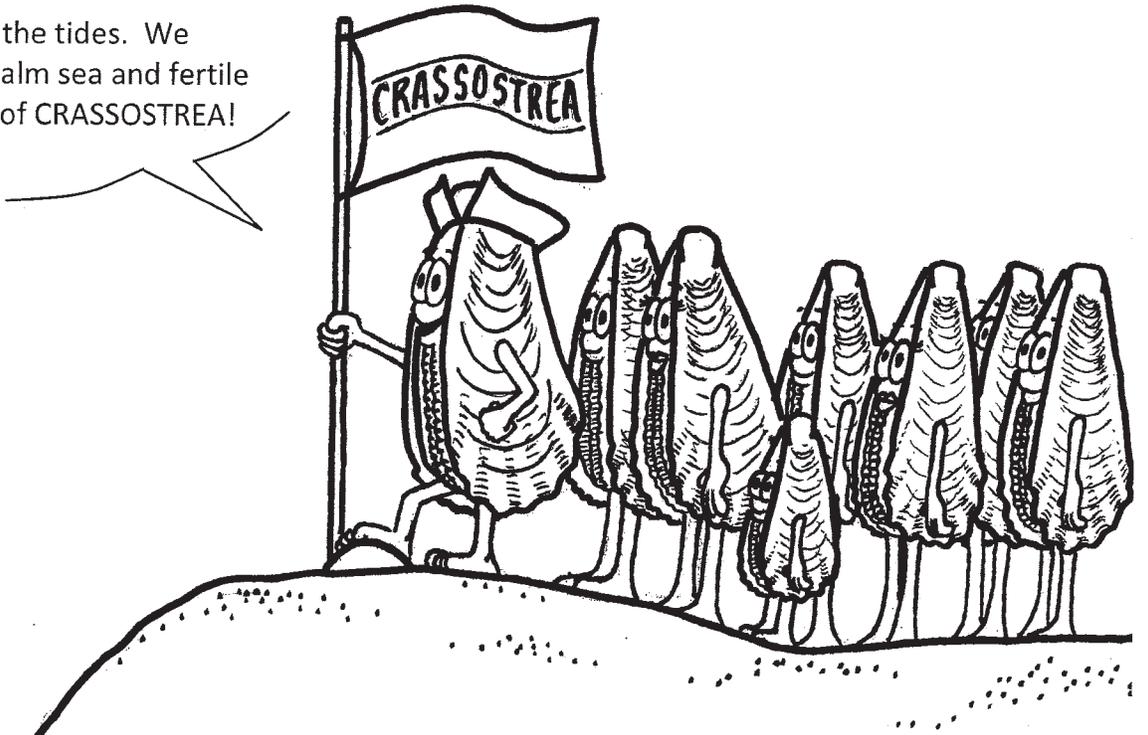


Oysters filter their food out of the water.



A female oyster can lay over 1,000,000 eggs in one year!

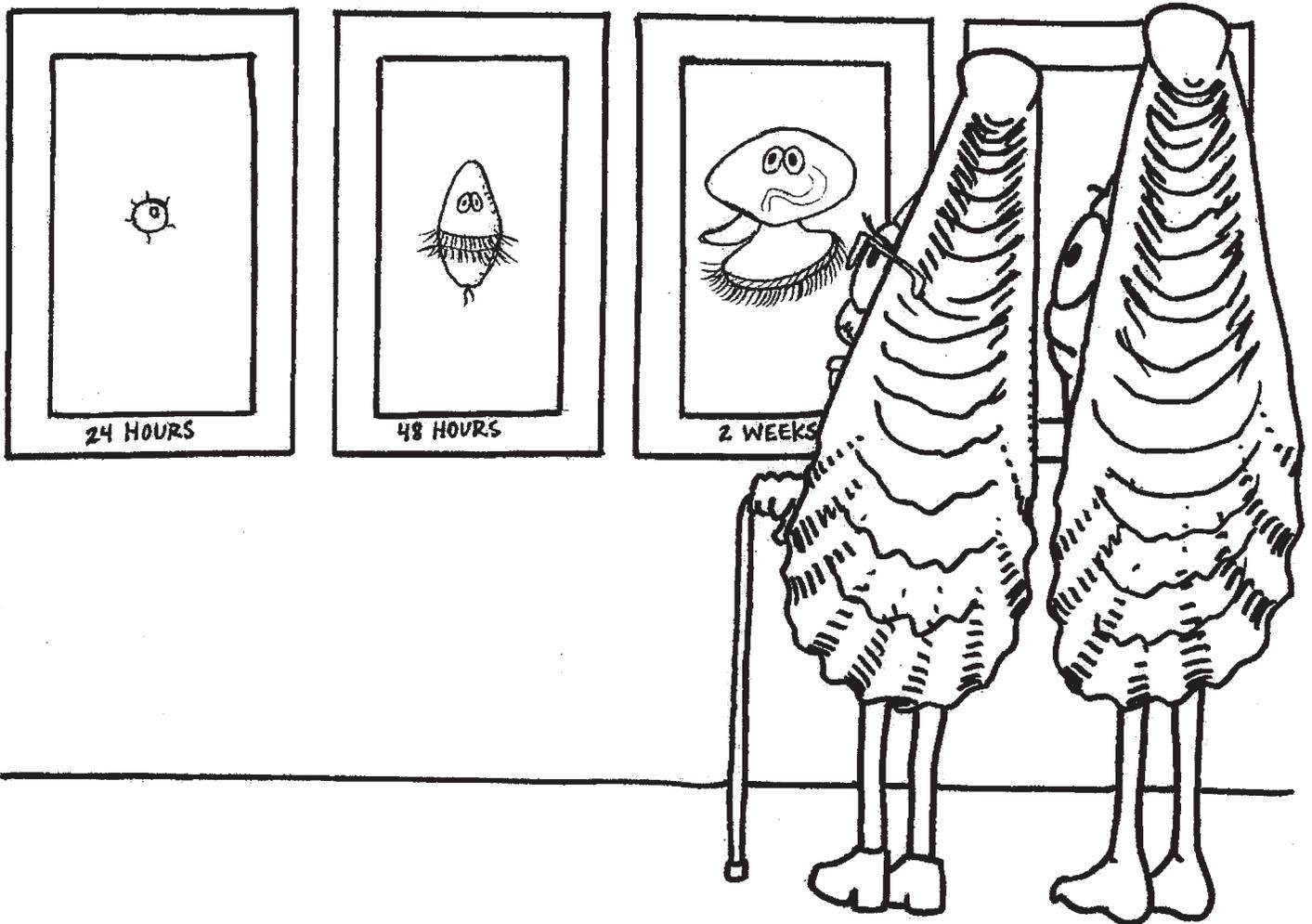
We came here, carried on the tides. We hereby claim this area of calm sea and fertile surroundings in the name of CRASSOSTREA! Here we shall colonize!



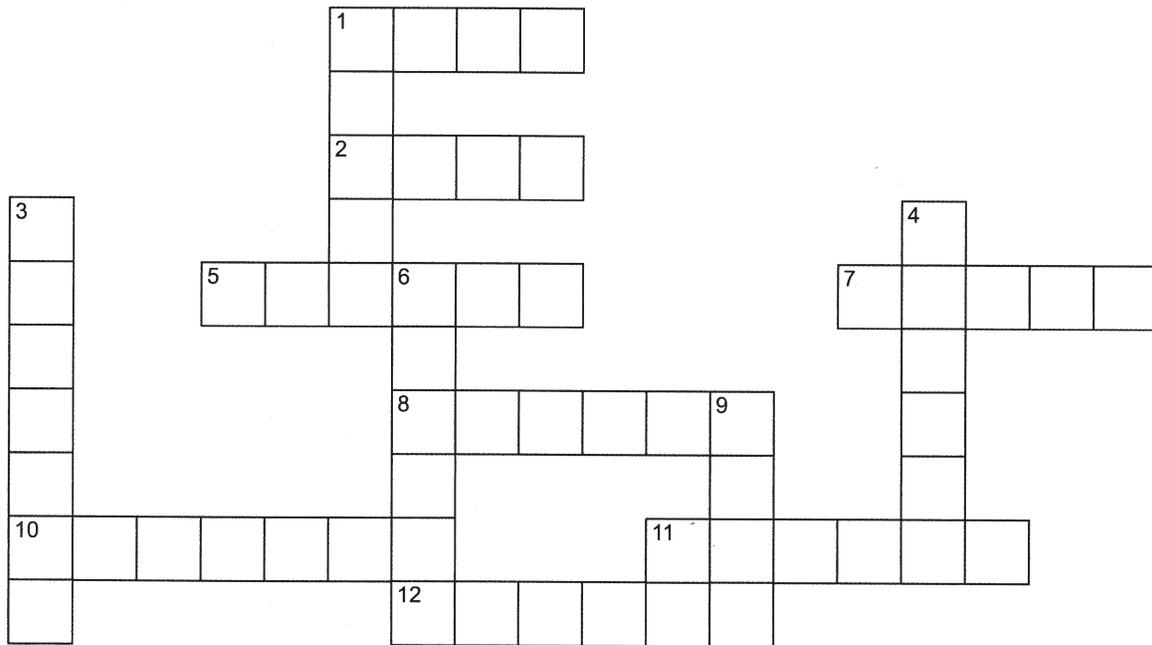
Oysters are colony builders. Groups of oysters settle together in one area.

Not the baby pictures again!

You grew up so fast...



Oyster eggs develop into free-swimming larvae. This larval stage goes on for three weeks. Eventually, the larvae settle to the bottom and never move again.



ACROSS

- 1 SPAT
- 2 EGGS
- 5 COLONY
- 7 WATER
- 8 SHUCKS
- 10 RECYCLE
- 11 FILTER
- 12 REEF

DOWN

- 1 SHELL
- 3 RESTORE
- 4 LARVAE
- 6 OYSTER
- 9 SWIM

# WORD SEARCH

U X J X F N B R X F T S E T T  
F T K G O R R K E I K R A U I  
U I A L S G G E Z C E U V S Y  
E B L P J U R Z U C U J R H P  
E R O T S E R H Y F E M A E W  
H Z T T E F S C Y B Q I L L N  
K R A T P R L M S R F W Z L K  
Y E D D P E X K G S O S Q D N  
X N K Q U U Z K C K H O P C A  
G I O U Q U A E E E A D H U U  
B D K L R M F P W N B D W R K  
W M X F O Y S T E R I A I Z F  
H G V Z L C Z L A V T L H B E  
E Z G V P U A M H E A C A T W  
N R I U W O G S R P T I G T L

COLONY

HABITAT

RECYCLE

SHELL

EGGS

LARVAE

REEF

SHUCKS

FILTER

OYSTER

RESTORE

SPAT

SWIM

WATER

# THE PROCESS

## SINK

Oysters are commercially harvested in Texas from November through April. The majority of these oysters are sold to restaurants and seafood wholesalers.

## YOUR

After an oyster is eaten at one of our partner restaurants, the shucked shells are separated from the trash and stockpiled throughout the year.

## SHUCKS

When a large enough volume of shells have been stockpiled, the shells are brought back out to bay waters and used to restore degraded oyster reefs.



# IMPORTANCE

## ECOLOGY

Oyster reefs provide habitat for a diverse group of animals including fish, shrimp, worms and crabs. Oysters are food for larger fish, rays and crabs that are capable of crushing their shells.

## ECONOMY

Oysters are big business – Texas is the 2nd largest oyster producer in the U.S. The oysters also provide “ecosystem services”: They improve water quality by filtering phytoplankton and excess nutrients, and the oyster reefs can form a protective breakwater that stabilizes the shoreline and protects against erosion.

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