

# Crab Lab!

Approximately 98% of all animals on the planet are invertebrates! Because of this, they can be divided up even further into several other categories based on similarities between their anatomy (body parts), bodily functions, and even their DNA! Crabs belong to a group of animals called Arthropods. This category, also called a *phylum*, focuses on animals that have jointed appendages. Though they may not appear to look alike, crabs are related to beetles, spiders, lobsters, and even barnacles!

Because crabs have an exoskeleton, they belong to a group, or *class*, of arthropods called crustaceans. Class Crustacea also include lobsters, shrimp, and barnacles. These animals not only have an exoskeleton, but also have paired appendages (legs and claws) and antennae that they use to sense their surroundings. Check out some of our local crab species and answer the questions below:



Striped Shore Crab



Swimmer Crab



Sheep Crab



Dungeness Crab



Kelp Crab

1. What are three adaptations these crab species have in common?
2. What are three differences between these crab species?
3. CHALLENGE QUESTION: What is the ecological role of crabs in their environment? (Why are they important to the health of the ocean?)

