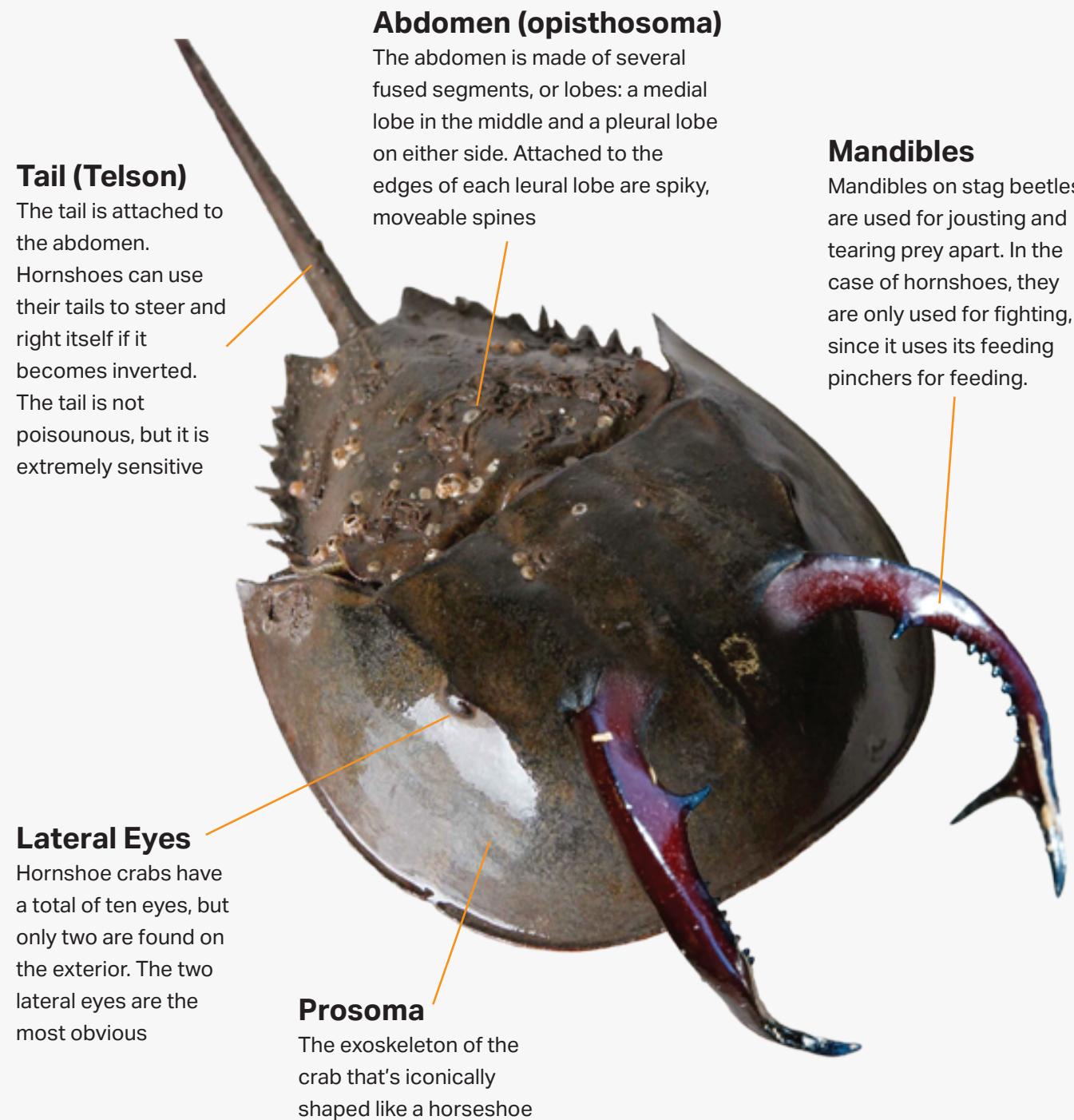


# WHAT'S IN A CRAB?



# HORNSHOE CRAB



The elusive horned horseshoe crab, nicknamed "The Hornshoe" (*Limulus cervus*) has recently been identified as a new species of marine arthropod. In most ways, the Hornshoe crab resembles all other known horseshoe crab species; it has the iconic semicircular carapace, a hinging abdomen, a pair of chelicerae (feeding pinchers), five pairs of walking legs, and a long needle-like tail. What sets the Hornshoe apart, however, are the two mandibles protruding from the outer front of its carapace. The mandibles appear identical in shape and color to those of stag beetles. They are generally a few centimeters longer and thicker than their tails, and can move laterally via small hinge-like

structures at their base. Recent genetic samplings and analyses have revealed that these horned horseshoe crabs have a unique strain of DNA, confirming their status as a separate species.

Hornshoe crabs can be found in shallow coastal waters worldwide, though the majority are concentrated along the North American Atlantic coast. "In recent years, they have made some appearances in bulk, most notably on the beaches of Cape Cod," says Iqra Collins, paleobiologist and lead investigator of a research team from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.

On May 18, Collins and her team surveyed a group of Hornshoes that had beached on the Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.

BY NANCY JAMISON

