

# WHAT IS A MOLT?







**One day while walking along the seashore you might see a Crab like the image above and think oh no its a dead crab that's so sad.**

Well, let us tell you about the amazing Crab Molt!

**A Molt Is Defined as:**

Crabs (and other crustaceans) cannot grow in a linear fashion like most animals. Because they have a hard outer shell (the exoskeleton) that does not grow, they must shed their shells, a process called molting.

**When we discover these molts, we usually explain it this way.**

“Grab your left arm and gently pull your skin. As we have an internal skeletal system, the skin will stretch as we grow!

Unlike Crabs and other crustaceans their skeleton is outside the body, so when they need to grow, they must ‘Molt’ or shed the skeleton.

This explains the molt, but not the process.”



**Not Viewing Digital? See:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsUBLF3eeRU>

**In the video we have found and revealed that this is clearly a Molt, as there are no internal organ present.**

Here is an explanation of the process: Molting is an inherent cyclic process that occurs in all crustaceans, as a crab grows its hard exoskeleton (shell) becomes too small for its body and it must grow a new one. The process of replacing the exoskeleton is called molting.

The molting cycle is an extremely complex process that is normally divided into 4 main stages: inter-molt, pre-molt, ecdysis (shedding), and post-molt. In addition, it is a very stressful and dangerous process for the crab that can take up to several hours and requires a lot of energy.

**THE STAGES**

1. Proecdysis(Pre-molting Stage)
2. Ecdysis (Molting Process)
3. Metecdysis (Post-molting Stage)
4. Anecdysis(Inter-molting Stage)







While finding Molts is quite easy, finding a Molt and New Crab is very RARE! In this image we can see Two Crabs! However, one is the Molt and the other is the Crab.... We are reminded of the parable, The Ship of Theseus..is this the same Crab?

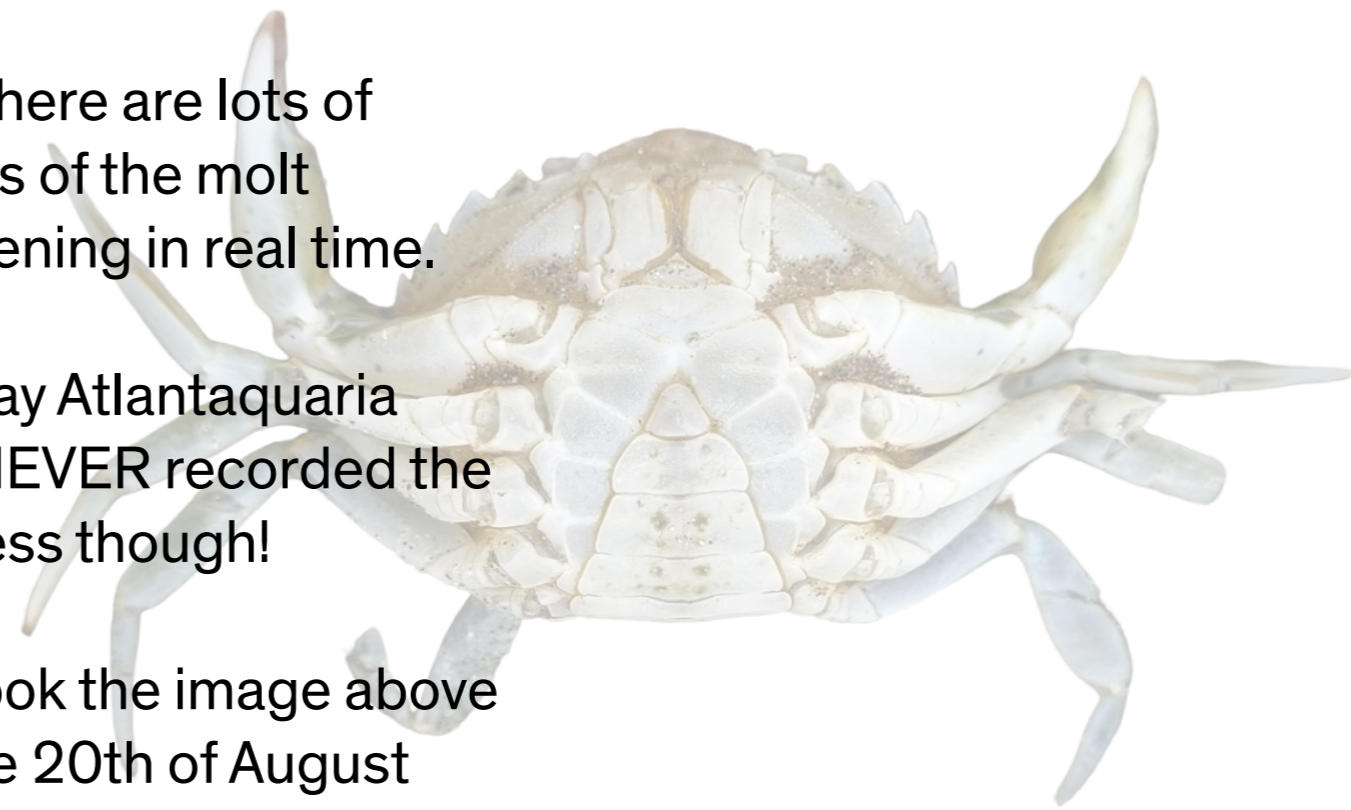


## HAS ANYONE RECORDED THE MOLT TAKING PLACE?

Yes, there are lots of videos of the molt happening in real time.

Galway Atlantaquaria has NEVER recorded the process though!

We took the image above on the 20th of August 2021! Just missing the molt by minutes.....









**So, next time you are  
see a 'Dead Crab' on the  
shore, you will have a  
cool story to tell....**



**Galway**   
**Atlantaquaria** 