

# Freakier Than Fiction



Lobsters are very strange animals with very strange bodies that are nothing like our own. In fact, as you read about how the lobster's body works, it'll probably sound more like you're reading about some strange alien creature than something that you're already familiar with, and may have actually eaten! The weirdest thing about lobsters has got to be that the way that they excrete their waste. A lobster urinates from small openings called **nephropores** that are located at the base of its second antennae—which is to say that lobsters basically pee from their face! They also excrete from other areas of their bodies, like their gills and digestive glands. Another thing that may make lobsters seem like something out of a science fiction movie is that they have two stomachs. One is located right behind the lobster's eyes, and it is full of something like teeth that are used to crush the lobster's food. These teeth-like features are called a **gastric mill**. One the food is thoroughly crushed, it moves along to the lobster's other stomach to be digested. Third, lobsters can regenerate lost limbs. If they lose a claw or a leg, they grow another one when they molt. "Molt" means to shed an old shell to make room for new growth. Lobsters molt several times a year until they reach adulthood. Because of this ability, it is not uncommon for a lobster to drop a leg or a claw if it needs to in order to escape from a predator. This adaptation is called **autotomy** or **reflex amputation**. The weird and wonderful lobster is a perfect example of the old adage that the truth is stranger than fiction!

1. What is it called when a lobster drops a leg or a claw to escape from a predator?

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2. What is the teeth-like structure in a lobster's first stomach called?

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3. What are the openings through which a lobster urinates called?

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4. What is it called when the lobster sheds an old shell to make room for new growth?

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