

SOUNDSIDE LEARNING

THIS WEEK ON CORE SOUND

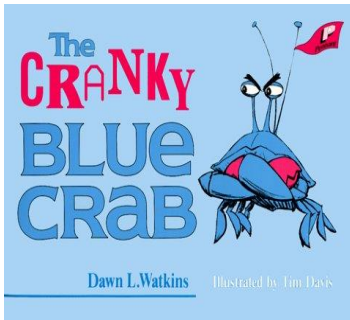


April 29, 2024

COMING UP AT CORE SOUND...

- **May 3-4:** Dark Sky Weekend
- **May 14:** Opening of "The Landing" exhibit
- **Click Here to [SIGN UP for Summer Camps](#) & for [More Upcoming Events!](#)**

Sound Reading Material For You and Your Child



The Cranky Blue Crab

By Dawn L. Watkins

Crusty the Crab is restless and unhappy. He leaves his seaside home under Jaggedy Ledge to look for adventure. As he travels across Sea Meadow he meets new friends, but he doesn't appreciate their kind patience, even when they help him to survive a scuffle with swarming bees. When he runs into trouble with Finefur the Sly, his new friends come to his aid. Crusty realizes that happiness comes more from what you are than from where you live.

Pages: 32
Grades: PreK-1

In a Pinch

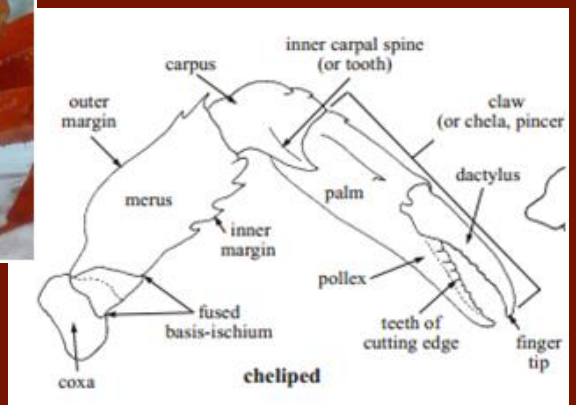
Daddy often returned home from crabbing his pots with stories that began with, "Youngins, tonight I got hurt the worst that's ever been." So, the night of this story started out as no surprise until I saw his finger bandaged with a blood-stained, torn piece of t-shirt and tape. Without hesitating I begged for the gory details. Daddy took me through pulling up his pot like usual, opening it, and shaking it above a wooden fish box. This time, however, a large, male blue crab fell onto the bottom of his boat. Dad knew to be careful when picking up the crab for its claws are strong with ends edged with teeth!

Daddy wore thick gloves while crabbing so he reached down to pick up the escaped rascal quickly as he had done hundreds of times before. Well, this fella was ready for him and clamped down on his knuckle. Daddy tried to wait calmly for the compression to slacken, but it didn't. He held his hand overboard hoping the crab would release its hold, but it didn't. Dad splashed water in his face to keep from passing out until finally there was only one thing left to do ...

Dad took a very deep breath, pulled his crab-clamped knuckle back into his boat, and in one quick, determined motion he bent over, slammed the crab on the floor of the boat, and powerfully stomped it with his foot! The crab impulsively tightened its grip for a split second then Dad was able to pull it apart relieving the grip. As soon as the crab was off his finger, Dad felt lightheaded and threw the boat's throttle down to get wind in his face to avoid fainting. After the pain subsided enough to work again, Daddy finished crabbing his remaining eighty pots!



crab photo and claw anatomy from <http://crablifeadoption.weebly.com>



Stewed Hard Crabs

Last week's newsletter explored catching blue crabs with a promise to visit cooking them my family's favorite way this week. Prepare yourselves for this, for if you have never eaten stewed hard crabs your world is about to shift on its axis, and if you have eaten them your mouth is about to water and the only way to appease your yearning is to stew a pot for supper! Here's how to do it!

Recipe by Polly Davis from *Island Born and Bred* cookbook

Ingredients

2 dz hard crabs, backed and cleaned well
6-8 medium white potatoes, diced or cubed
1 large onion, diced
Salt and pepper to taste
6-8 thin slices of salt fat-back (or 2 tbsps. oil)
Corn meal dumplings

**NOTE: Never stir ingredients! Use a long fork to lift crabs occasionally. Use a long spoon to loosen dumplings from sides of pot and allow gravy to cover dumplings. Wetting hands before Putting dumplings around sides of pot proves helpful to prevent sticking to your fingers.*

Fry fat back in bottom of large pot. Place crabs in pot. Add potatoes, onion, salt and pepper. Cover with water. Cook over medium heat for approximately 15 minutes after full-boil begins.

Mix corn meal dumplings. Form dumplings in hands; place around sides of pot. Break-up at least 1 dumpling and stir-in (see *Note above) to thicken gravy to desired thickness. Yields 4-6 servings.

Corn Meal Dumplings (Granny Louise Hancock's recipe)

1 cup plain white fine ground meal
½ cup plain all-purpose flour
2 tsp salt
2 tbsp sugar

Mix above ingredients. Add enough water to form dough. Pinch off bob-jack sized pieces. Roll into ball; flatten with hand. (*I can still see Granny's finger impressions in each dumpling she flattened!*) Drop into side of stew.



The Shell of It All

Blue crab shells are marvels of nature, offering both protection and flexibility to these crustaceans. Composed primarily of chitin, a tough and durable substance, blue crab shells provide a sturdy exoskeleton. Chitin, a polysaccharide like cellulose, provides structural support while allowing for growth and movement.

The shells also contain minerals such as calcium carbonate, adding strength and rigidity. This unique composition enables blue crabs to navigate their aquatic environments with agility while safeguarding against predators. Understanding the intricate makeup of blue crab shells sheds light on the remarkable adaptations of these creatures to their underwater habitats.