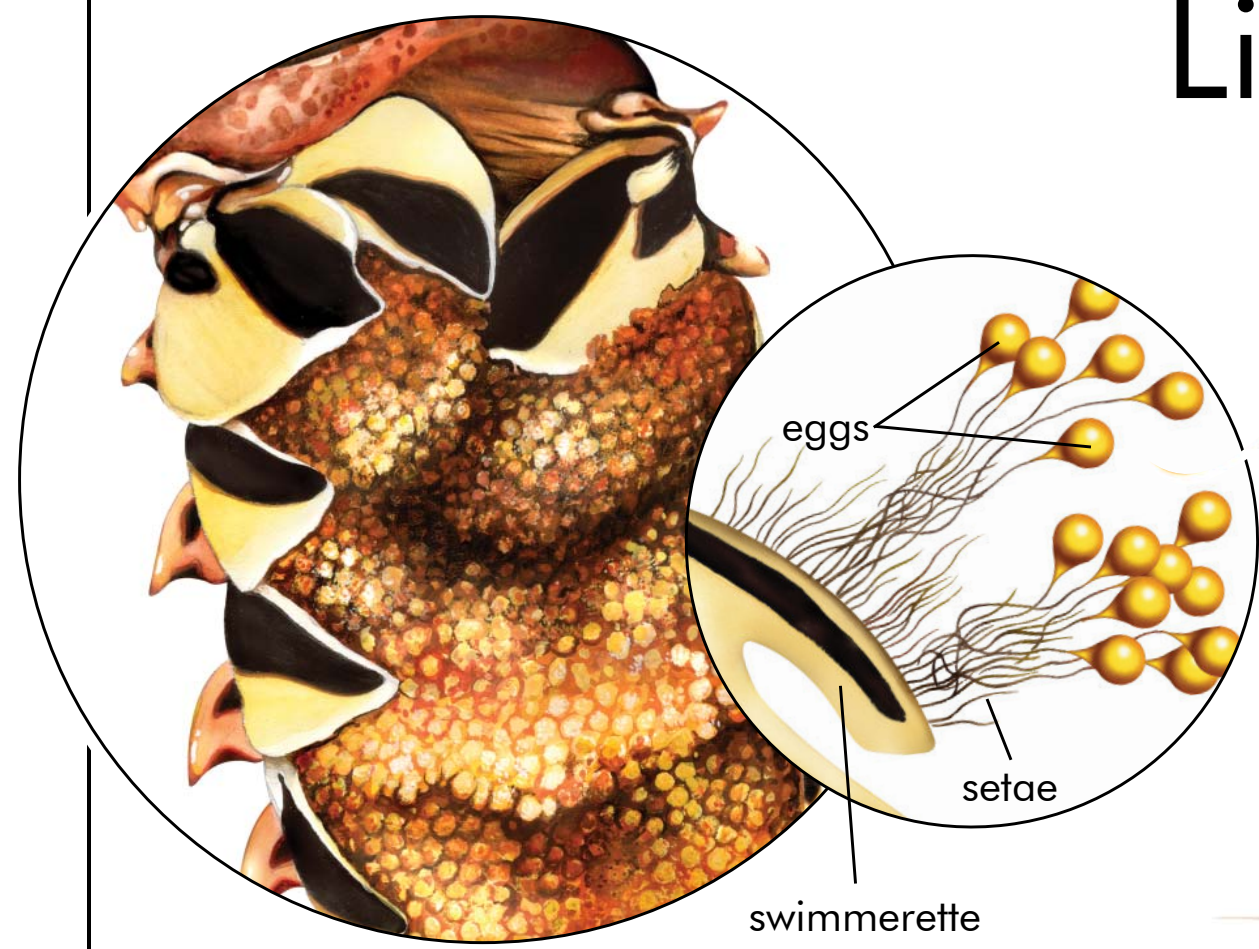
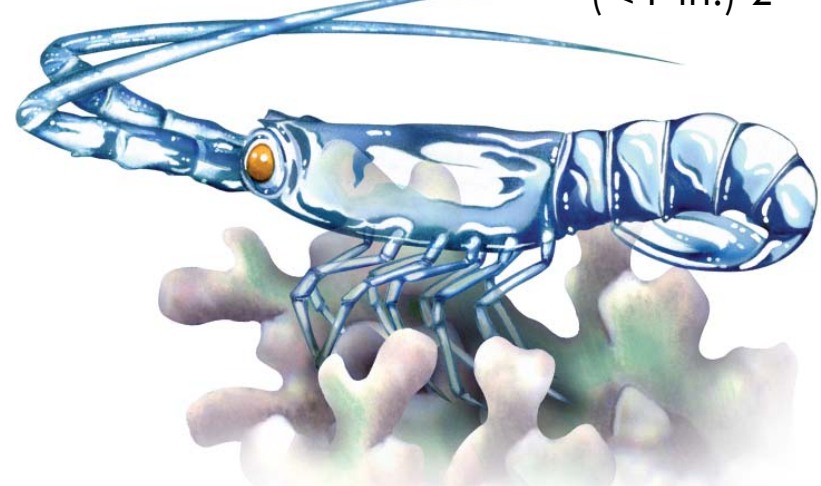


## Life Cycle

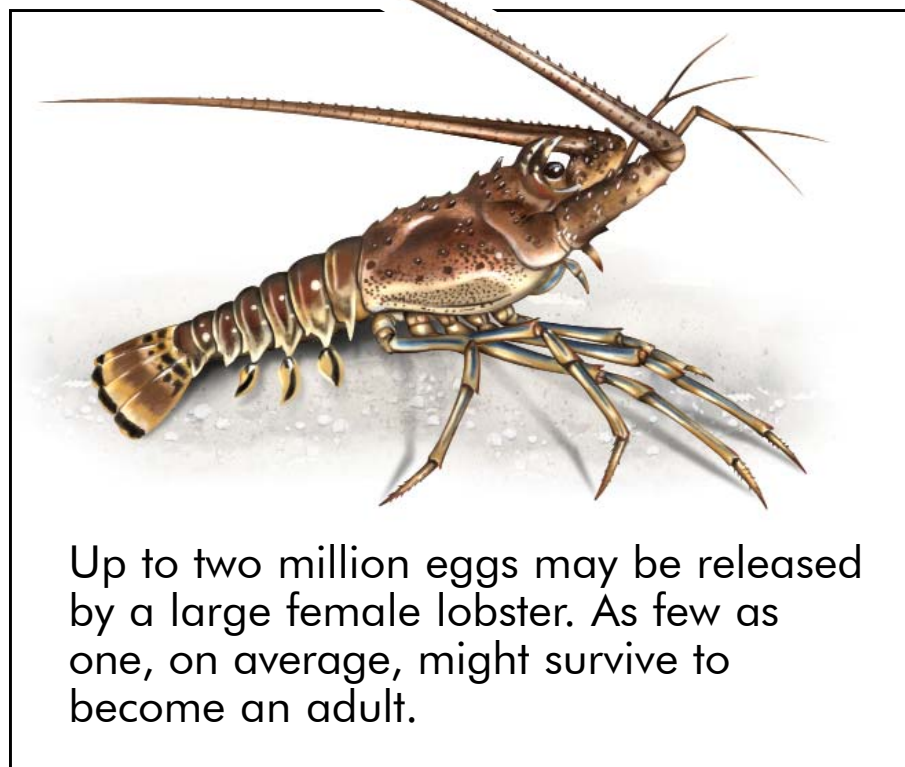


- After the eggs are fertilized, the female carries them in the tiny hairs (setae) under her tail until they hatch.

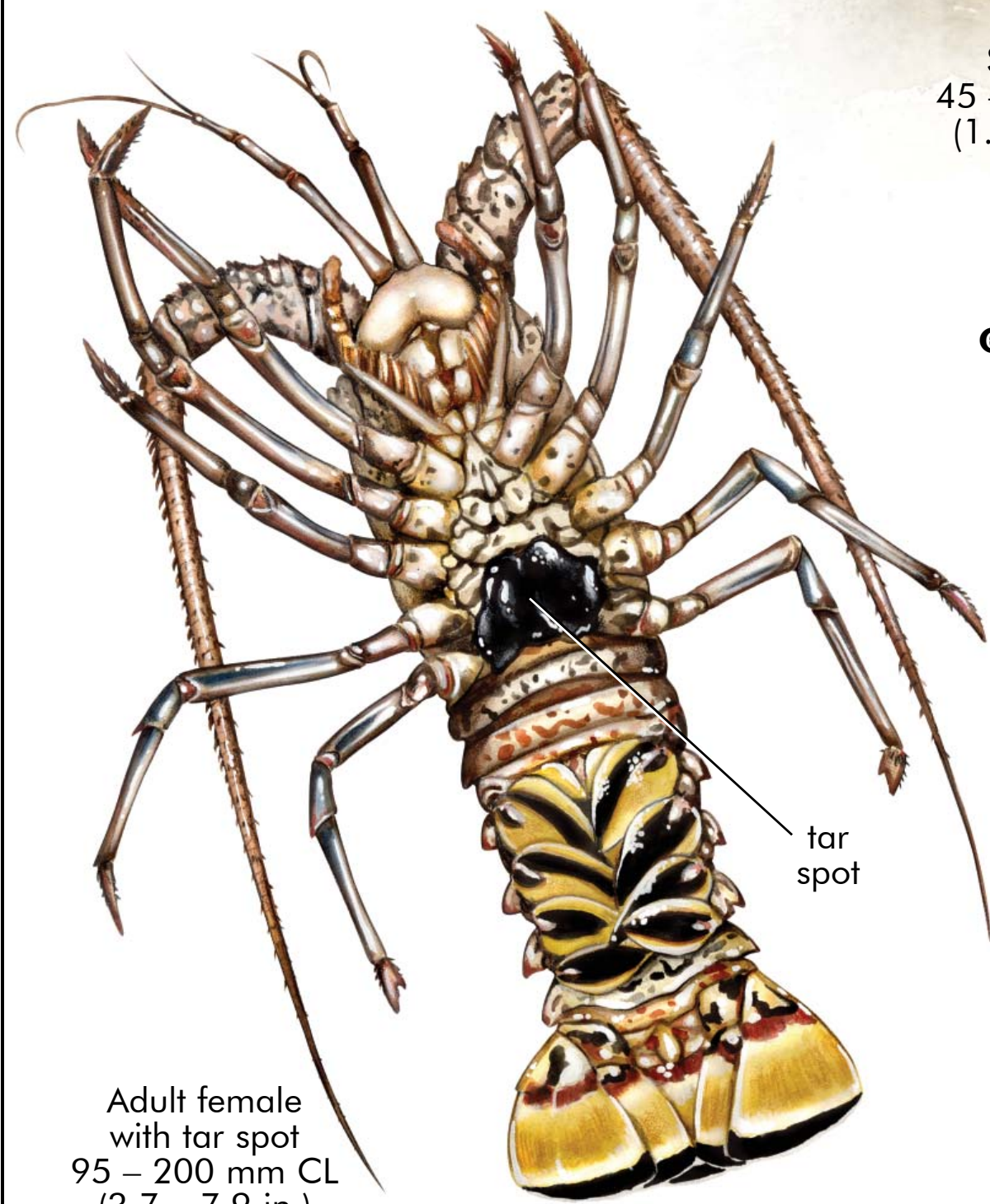
Postlarval stage  
6 – 7 mm carapace length (CL)  
(< 1 in.) 2 – 4 weeks



- Phyllosome metamorphose into the puerulus post-larva and transit from the open ocean to near-shore nursery habitats (primarily a macroalgae called *Laurencia*).



Up to two million eggs may be released by a large female lobster. As few as one, on average, might survive to become an adult.



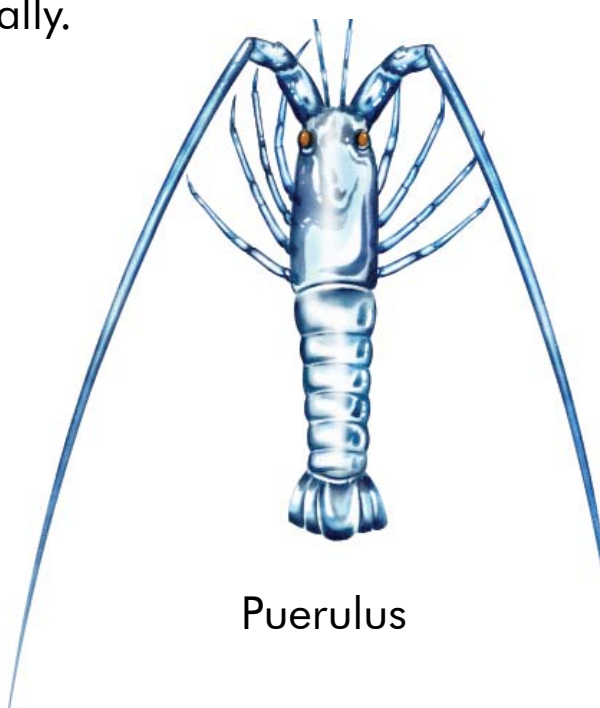
Adult female with tar spot  
95 – 200 mm CL  
(3.7 – 7.9 in.)

The male attaches a tar-like spermatophore to the underside of the female's carapace. Most reproduction occurs during the late spring, with females producing several clutches of eggs during the reproductive season.

In unfished areas Caribbean spiny lobsters can grow to 200mm CL (7.9 in.) and over 5 kg (11.2 lbs.) in mass. Due to the heavy fishing of the spiny lobster, over 90% of legal sized adults may be harvested annually.



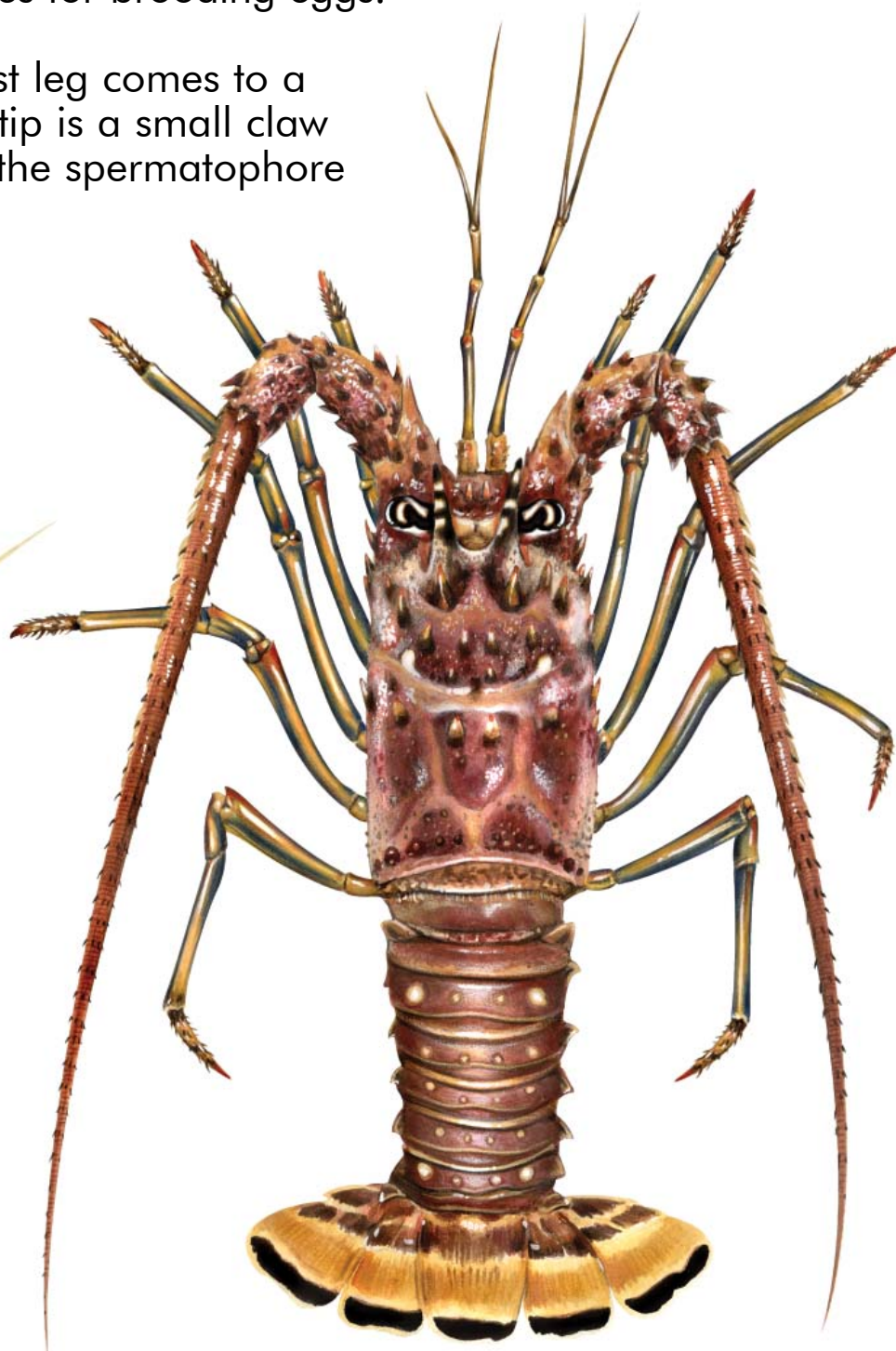
Late stage phyllosome larva



Puerulus

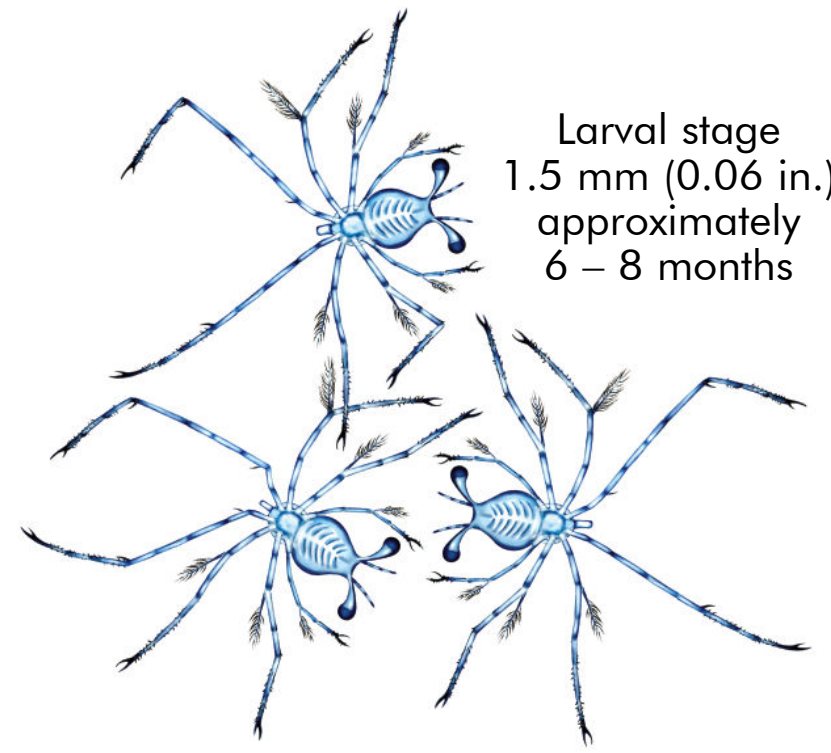


Juvenile



Adult

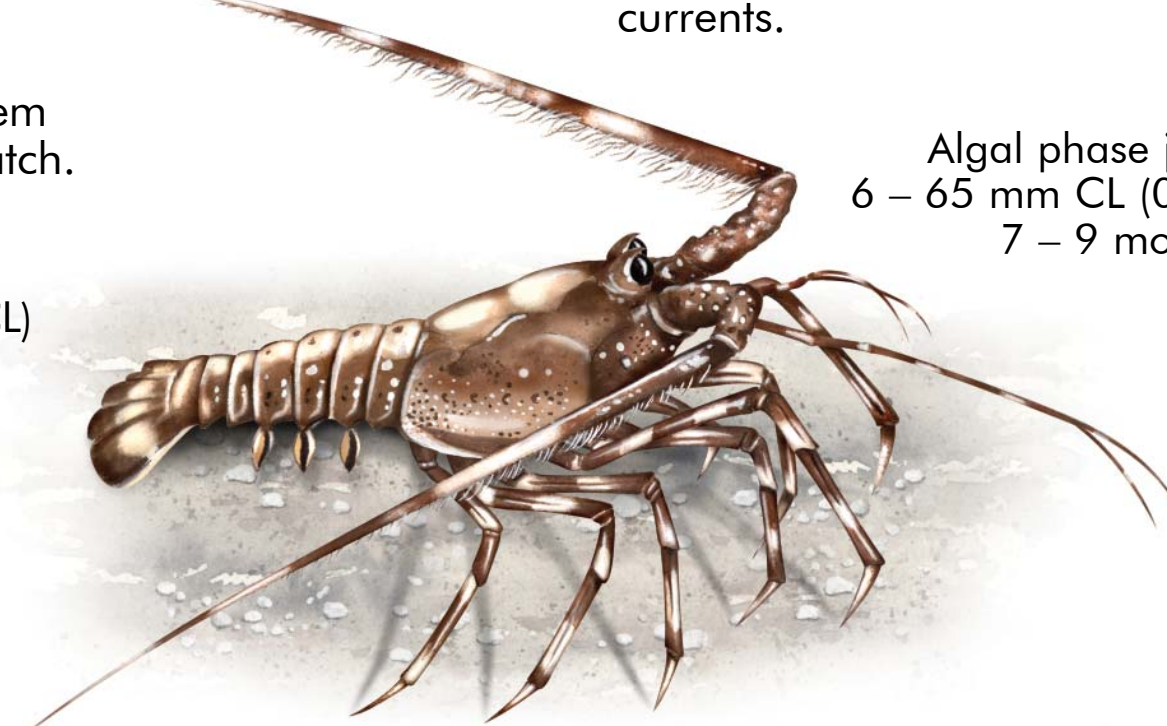
- Each egg takes up water and expands until the egg membrane breaks and the new lobster larva is released.



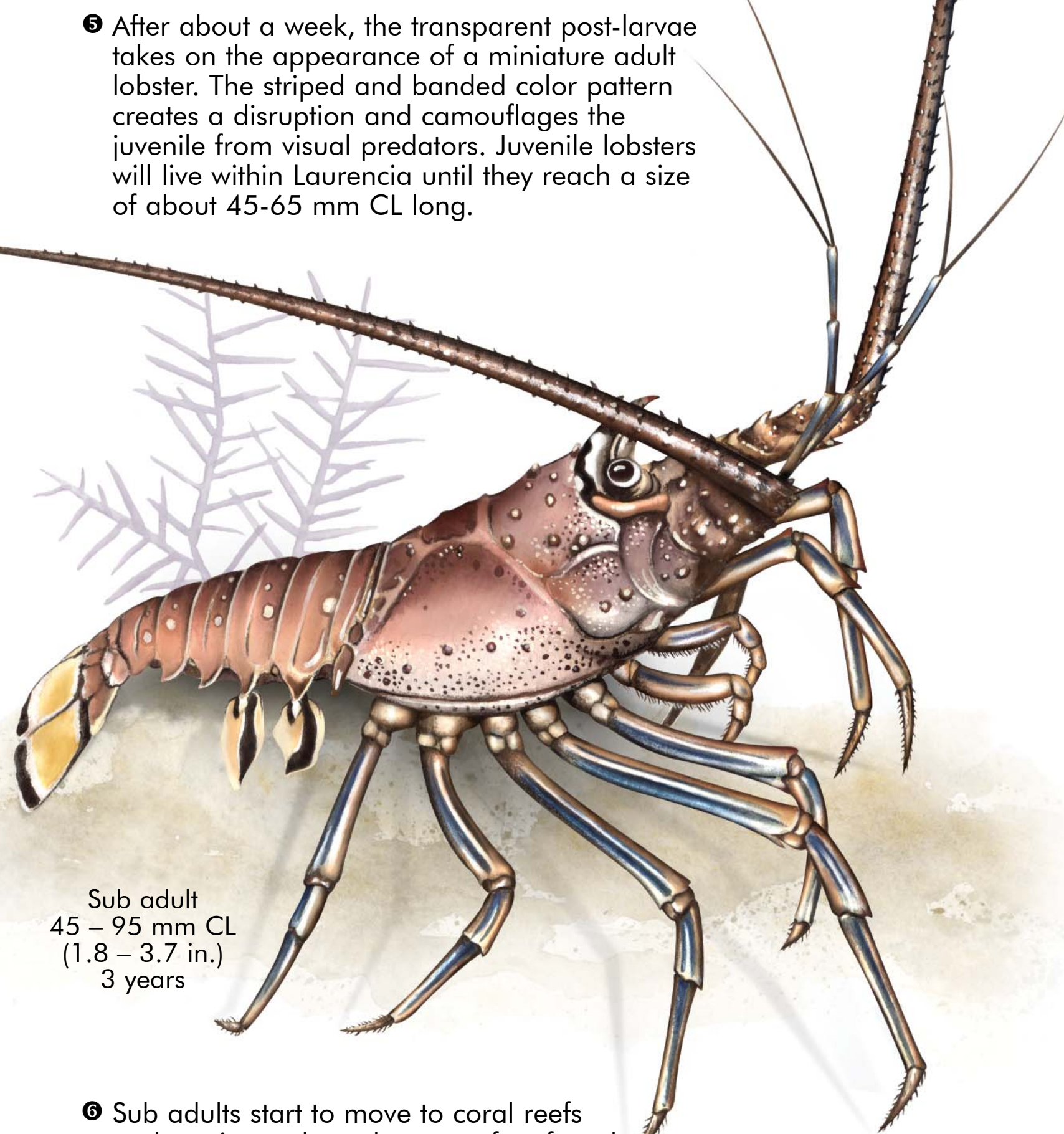
Larval stage  
1.5 mm (0.06 in.)  
approximately  
6 – 8 months

- After hatching, transparent phyllosome (leaf-bodied) larvae can be carried several hundred miles by ocean currents.

Algal phase juveniles  
6 – 65 mm CL (0.2 – 2.6 in.)  
7 – 9 months

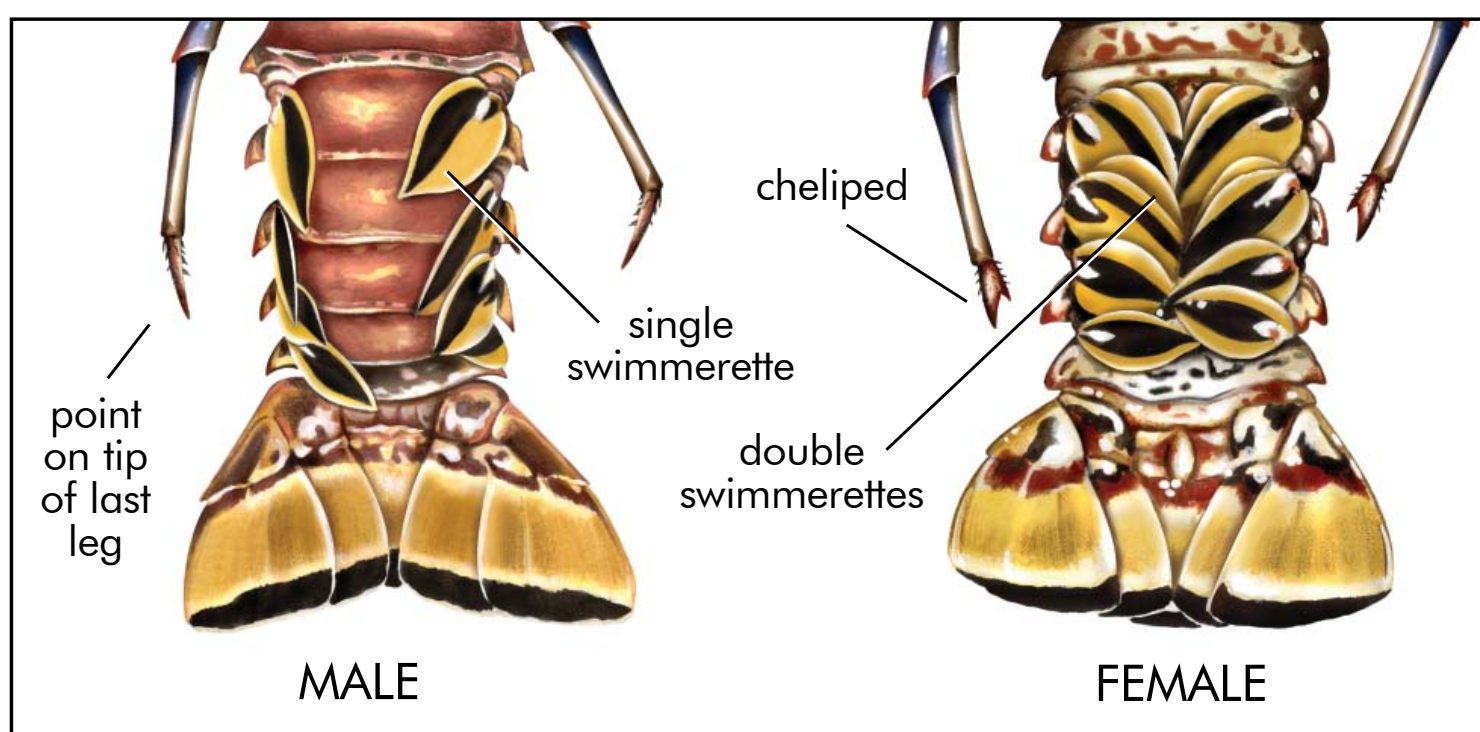


- After about a week, the transparent post-larvae takes on the appearance of a miniature adult lobster. The striped and banded color pattern creates a disruption and camouflages the juvenile from visual predators. Juvenile lobsters will live within *Laurencia* until they reach a size of about 45-65 mm CL long.



Sub adult  
45 – 95 mm CL  
(1.8 – 3.7 in.)  
3 years

- Sub adults start to move to coral reefs and crevices, where they are often found in large groups during the day. It takes lobsters up to 3 years to reach adulthood and start reproducing.



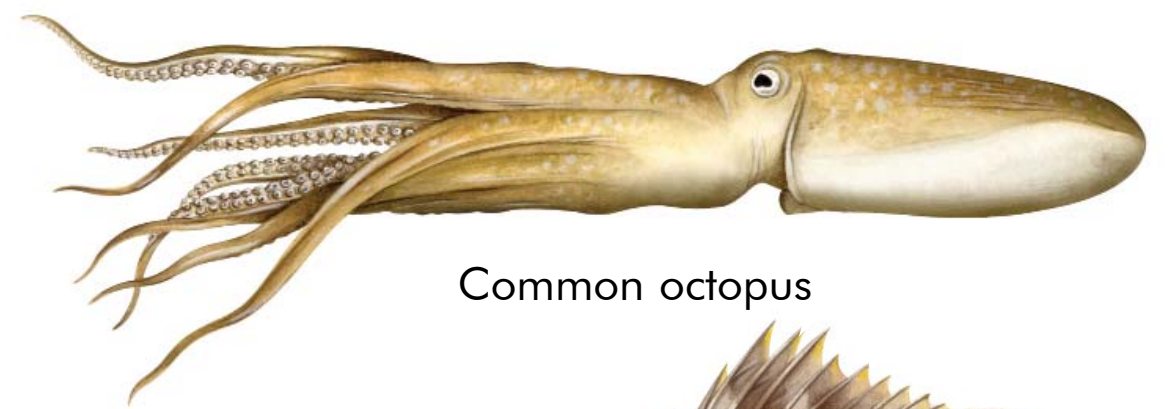
- Males have a single swimmerette whereas in females several of them are forked or double swimmerettes for brooding eggs.

- In males, the tip of the last leg comes to a sharp point. In females, the tip is a small claw (a cheliped) used to scratch the spermatophore and fertilize eggs.

# CARIBBEAN Spiny Lobster

*Panulirus argus*

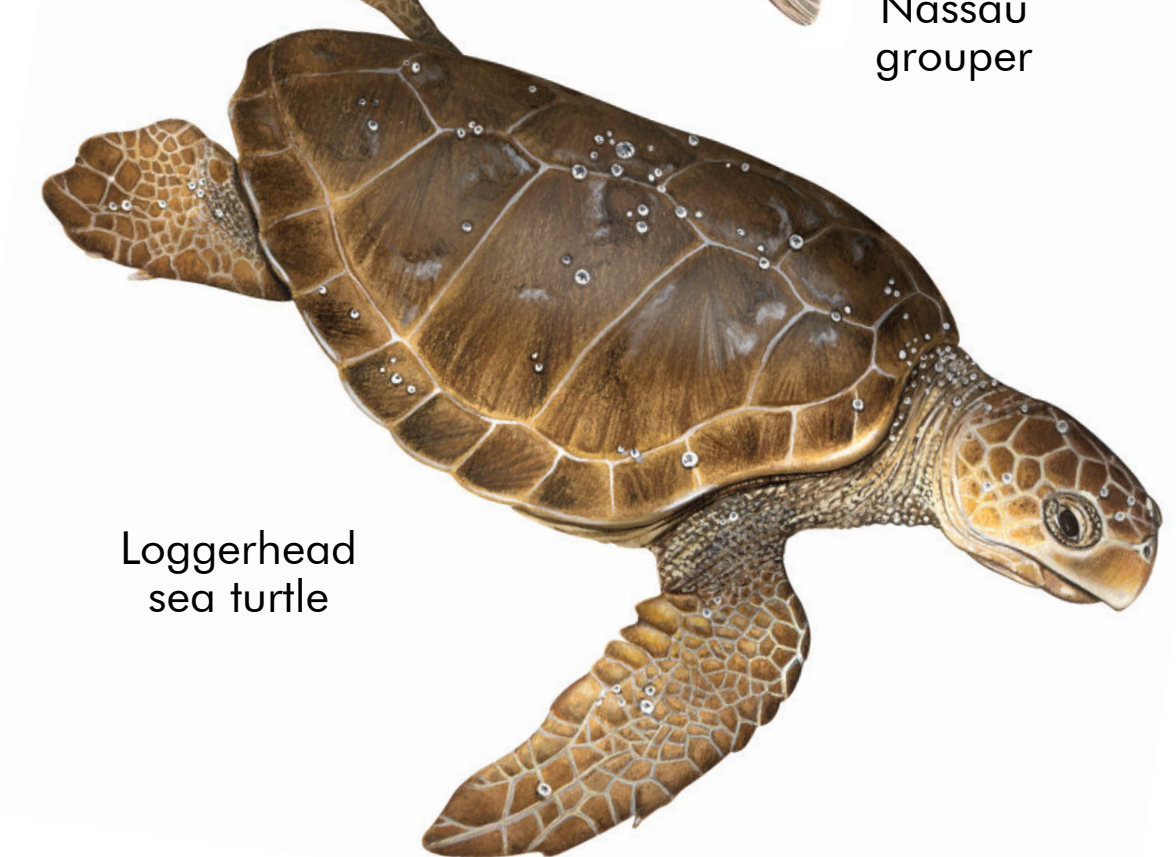
## Natural Predators



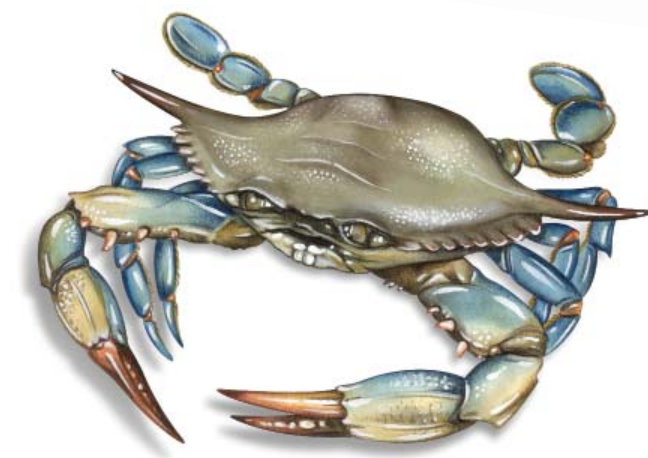
Common octopus



Nassau grouper



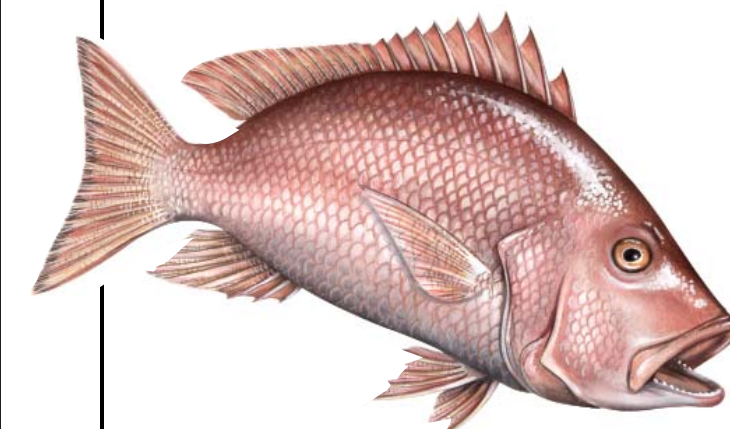
Loggerhead sea turtle



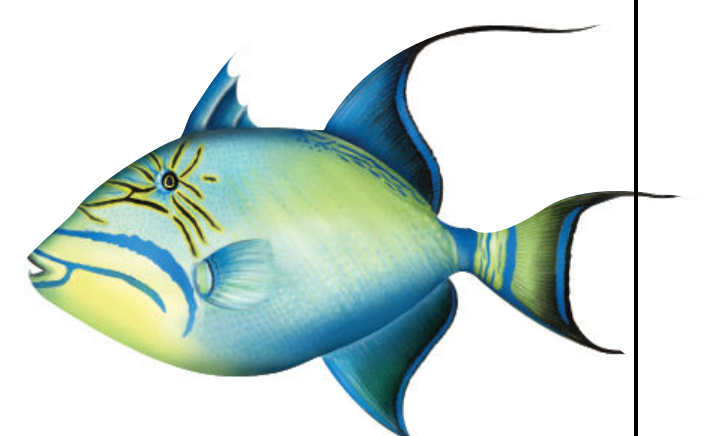
Blue crab



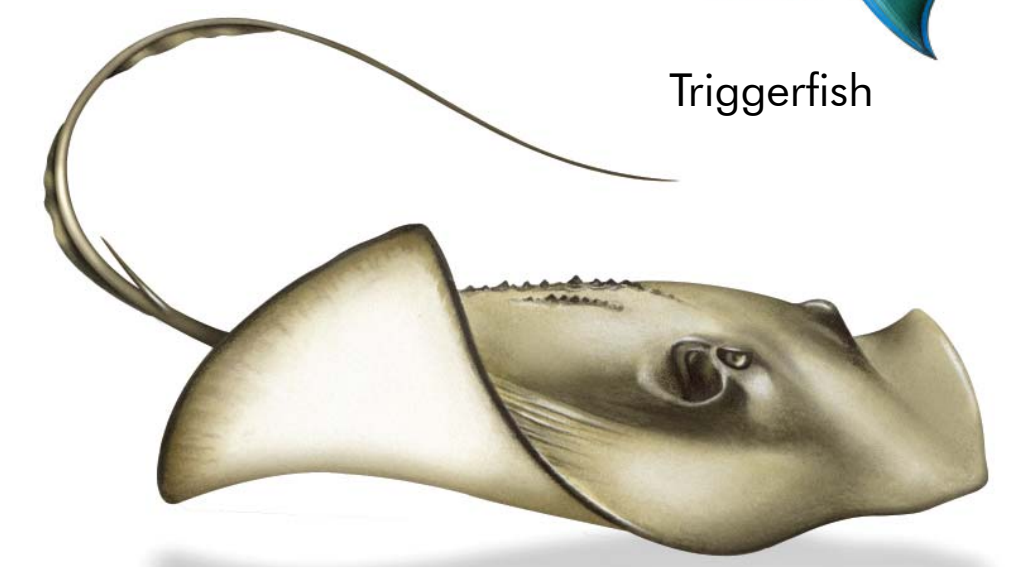
Nurse shark



Snapper



Triggerfish



Southern stingray



"Providing solutions for people and our oceans through research and education, since 1970."

Phone: (561) 741-0192  
Email: [cmrc@cmrc.org](mailto:cmrc@cmrc.org)  
[www.cmrc.org](http://www.cmrc.org)