



Mantis Shrimp

The mantis shrimp is a type of marine crustacean of the order **Stomatopoda**. Its **carapace** – that is, the bony, thick shell that covers crustaceans and some other species – covers only the rear part of the head and the first four segments of the thorax. Varieties range from **shades of brown** to **vivid colors**, as there are more than **450 species** of this shrimp. They are among the most important predators in shallow, tropical and sub-tropical marine habitats. Despite being common, however, their habits are little known and studied as many species spend most of their life tucked away in **burrows** and holes. They are also commonly referred to as "**thumb splitters**" because of their ability to inflict painful gashes with their powerful **claws** if handled incautiously – so much so that, in captivity, some larger species are capable of breaking through aquarium glasses with a single strike.



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