

# THE LIFE CYCLE OF A SHORE CRAB

## DRIFTING

The tiny **Zoea larvae** are part of the plankton, which are moved around by water currents.

## HATCHING

The eggs hatch into microscopic **Zoea larvae** which drift away from their mother.

## CHANGING

After 3-4 weeks of feeding on smaller plankton the **Zoea larvae** develop into **Megalopa larvae**.

## SETTLING

The **Megalopa larval** stage only lasts a few days. It then settles to the bottom in the same form as the adult crab.

## MATING

The adult female's **eggs** are fertilised by the adult male's **sperm**.

## MOULTING

**Juveniles** grow in stages, by shedding their skin and forming a larger one, in a process called moulting.

## BROODING

The female carries thousands of developing **eggs** under her tail, for up to two months.

Female crabs have a wide tail.

Male crabs have a narrow tail.

