

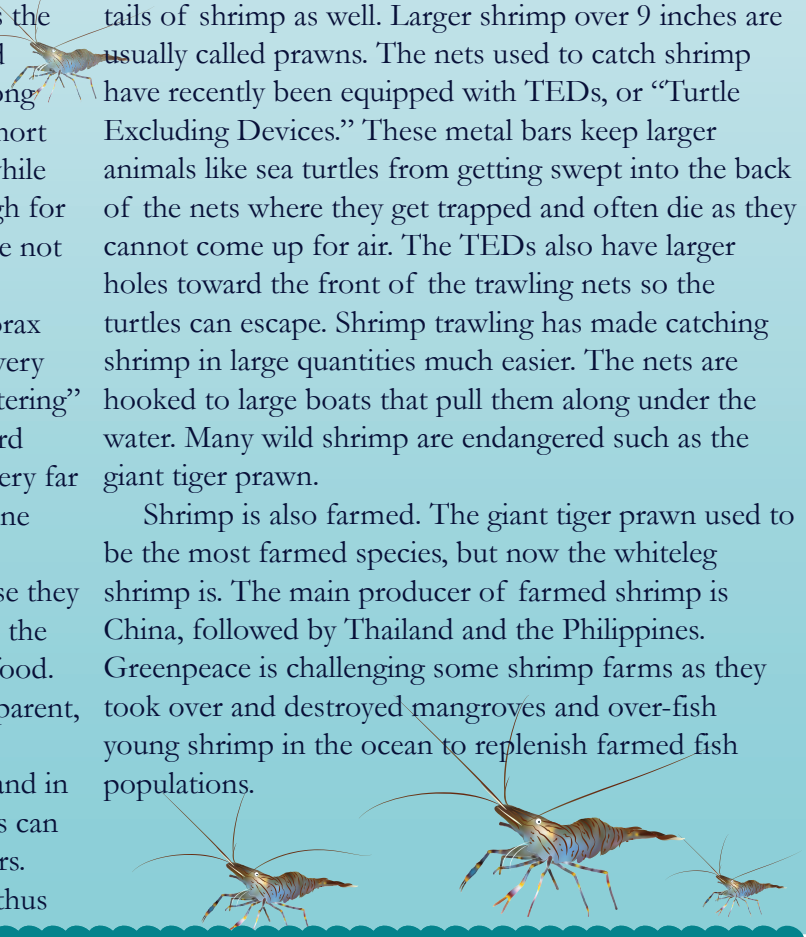
# Shrimp

Not all scientists agree on which species are included in the term “shrimp.” The wider definition covers the same as “prawns.” These are defined as stalk-eyed swimming crustaceans with long muscular tails, long whiskers (antennae), and thin legs. Shrimp have short legs called **swimmerets** that they use to paddle while swimming. Their longer legs are not strong enough for walking and are mainly for perching when they are not swimming. Shrimp, like crabs and lobsters, have a **cephalothorax**, which means their heads and thorax are fused together. Their abdomens and tails are very strong. Shrimp can swim backwards fast by “lobstering” or quickly flexing and unflexing their tail up toward their bellies. Shrimp have eye stalks that can see very far to either side. They have two pairs of antennae, one pair being twice as long as their bodies. The long antennae can feel as well as smell and taste because they have chemoreceptors that can detect chemicals in the water. The short antennae are mainly for testing food. Shrimp have a segmented shell that is often transparent, or see-through.

Shrimp can be found feeding on the seafloor and in rivers and lakes almost everywhere. Some species can do a flip and dive into the sand to escape predators. Shrimp are eaten by many larger animals and are thus

important to the food chain. People eat the muscular tails of shrimp as well. Larger shrimp over 9 inches are usually called prawns. The nets used to catch shrimp have recently been equipped with TEDs, or “Turtle Excluding Devices.” These metal bars keep larger animals like sea turtles from getting swept into the back of the nets where they get trapped and often die as they cannot come up for air. The TEDs also have larger holes toward the front of the trawling nets so the turtles can escape. Shrimp trawling has made catching shrimp in large quantities much easier. The nets are hooked to large boats that pull them along under the water. Many wild shrimp are endangered such as the giant tiger prawn.

Shrimp is also farmed. The giant tiger prawn used to be the most farmed species, but now the whiteleg shrimp is. The main producer of farmed shrimp is China, followed by Thailand and the Philippines. Greenpeace is challenging some shrimp farms as they took over and destroyed mangroves and over-fish young shrimp in the ocean to replenish farmed fish populations.



1. **New terms:** See how these three terms are used in the text, and write a definition next to each one.

**swimmerets**

**cephalothorax**

**lobstering**

2. Why are shrimp important to the food chain? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Shrimp are only found in the ocean.

**True or False?**

4. The United States is the main producer of farmed shrimp.

**True or False?**