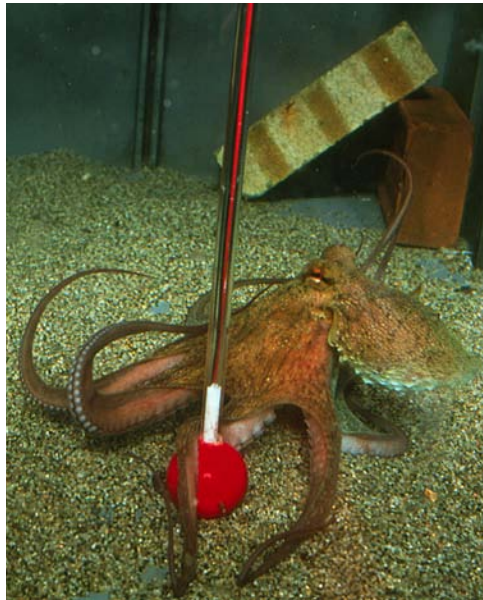


# SMART, DARING, CLEVER

Octopuses are smart. They can also be daring and clever. Captured octopuses have escaped from their tanks at night. Some have crawled into neighboring tanks full of small fish to gobble them up. Others have waited in hiding for their human captors to come near and then they have spit in their faces.

With their soft bodies, octopuses can go almost anywhere. Scientists have filmed them squeezing through mazes of narrow tubes as if their muscular bodies were made of goo.

They can also change shape and color to scare off predators. Some octopuses can make themselves look like sea snakes, poison fish, or other deadly creatures. Others can change their shape to look like a rock and change their color to blend with surrounding coral. What amazing adaptations!



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Researchers have discovered that octopuses have good memories, can recognize colors and shapes, and can think through puzzles. When threatened, the octopuses hide under the blocks at the upper right of the tank.



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## The Octopus and the Coconut:

*Grab That Coconut and Run!*

By Ron Fridell

Birds make nests out of twigs and stems. Beavers build lodges out of mud and branches. Recently, scientists added the octopus to the list of animals that build their own homes.

Teams of scientists took diving gear and underwater video cameras to islands in Eastern Asia. In the ocean waters, they swam along with octopuses to see what they could learn. Some of what they saw surprised them.



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A coconut-shell octopus shelter

These octopuses build their undersea homes from coconut shells that humans have cut in half, hollowed out, and tossed into the muddy ocean. To collect the shells, each octopus has eight muscular *tentacles* that it uses both as arms to reach and grab with and as legs to walk on.

See Octopus on page 2

# Octopus

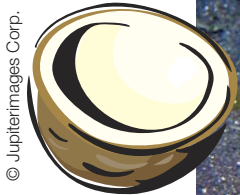
Continued from page 1

It starts by using its tentacles as arms to twist and turn the shell until it's free from the mud. Then it flips the shell over so that the open side faces up, like a bowl. To get the mud out, it has powerful muscles that shoot jets of water into the bowl. And *whoosh*, out goes the mud.

Now the octopus must finish the job. After lowering its tentacles around the shell, it uses some of them as arms to lift it and others as legs to walk away. The octopus looks as if it's walking on tiptoes as it scurries away with its treasure.



The octopus grabs a shell and carries it across the sea floor.



## Do You Know?

The octopus is a soft-bodied creature that has no shell outside and no skeleton inside. Beneath its strong coconut-shell home, it can stay safe from predators.



## Write About This!



Write a humorous short story about a day in the life of a person who has four arms and four legs.

## FUN FACTS

An octopus can:

- grow a new tentacle if one is cut off;
- squirt clouds of ink to confuse its enemies;
- poison its prey to paralyze it.



An octopus has:

- an eye on each side of its head;
- a beak that looks like a parrot's;
- hundreds of suction cups on its tentacles, which it uses to grab things.



Create an advertising poster for an octopus clothing store.

