

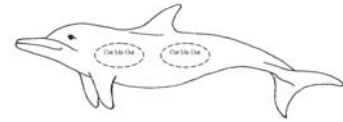
## Ocean Commotion Coastal Critter Masks

*Teachers: Print masks on heavy paper if available. Cut out coastal critter masks in an oval shape to give strength. Color and decorate masks with crayons, pencils, markers, paints, glitter, feathers, etc. Come to Ocean Commotion wearing them as badges, masks or hats or send us photos from your school. Try them for Halloween and Mardi Gras. Learn about your coastal critter and write your favorite fact on the back of your mask.*

### Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

The Bottlenose dolphin ...

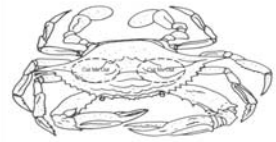
- is the most common and well known dolphin.
- is an air breathing mammal.
- is a small grey cetacean and is related to whales.
- lives near the coast and inshore waters and is common in Louisiana.
- is found from Cape Hatteras to southern Florida and throughout the Gulf of Mexico.
- eats small fish and occasionally squid, crabs and shrimp.
- works as a team to keep fish close together to maximize the harvest.
- has cone-like teeth that are used to grasp food but not to chew it.
- uses sonar to find prey.
- can live up to 25 years.
- is 8-10 ft (2.5-3 m) long.
- weighs 300-650 lb (135-300 kg).
- travels together in pods.
- can dive down to more than 1,000 feet (305 m).
- can jump up to 20 feet (6 m) out of the water.



### Blue Crab (*Callinectes sapidus*)

Blue crabs...

- are crustaceans with 10 appendages or legs.
- are related to the shrimp, lobster and crawfish.
- range from Nova Scotia south along the Atlantic coast, throughout the Gulf of Mexico and along the east coast of South America.
- are found in brackish lagoons and estuaries.
- are bottom-dwellers.
- are omnivores. They eat just about anything!
- can grow up to 9 inches wide.
- live for 1 to 3 years.
- weigh up to 2 pounds.
- walk sideways.
- have sapphire-tinted claws.
- combined harvest in 2006 was about 52 million lbs (24 million kg) worth \$32 million.



## American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*)



The American Alligator...

- is a reptile with tough, heavy skin and is related to crocodiles.
- builds nests and lay eggs.
- is native to the United States and China and is found in coastal states from North Carolina to Texas and Oklahoma and Arkansas.
- lives primarily in freshwater environments such as ponds, marshes, rivers and swamps.
- is an opportunistic feeder and eats almost anything it can catch.
- young eat fish, insects, snails and crustaceans.
- adults eat fish, turtles, mammals, birds and other reptiles.
- has a transparent third eyelid that gives underwater protection.
- has 80 conical teeth that are used for grabbing and holding, not for cutting.
- can use 2,000-3,000 teeth in a lifetime.
- average size is 8.2 ft (2.5 m) and average weight is 800 lbs (363 kg).
- maximum recorded length is 19 ft 2 in (5.8 m).
- was first harvested in Louisiana in the early 1800's for its skin and for its oil.
- hide, meat and eggs harvested in Louisiana has generated over \$20 million each year.
- adult can survive freezing conditions if it is in water.
- conservation program began in the 1970s after the population declined due to poaching.

## Spotted Sea Trout, Speckled Trout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*)

The Spotted sea trout or speckled trout...

- is a common estuarine fish.
- is a voracious predator.
- eats shrimp, crabs and fish.
- is a member of the drum family, not the trout family.
- can live to about 8-10 years.
- average length for a male is 19 in (28 cm) and 25 in (64cm) for a female).
- weighs from 1-2 lbs (0.5 to 1 kg).
- travels in small schools.
- is a recreational fish in Louisiana.
- has two prominent canine teeth.
- males produce a "drumming" sound to attract females.

