Common Octopus

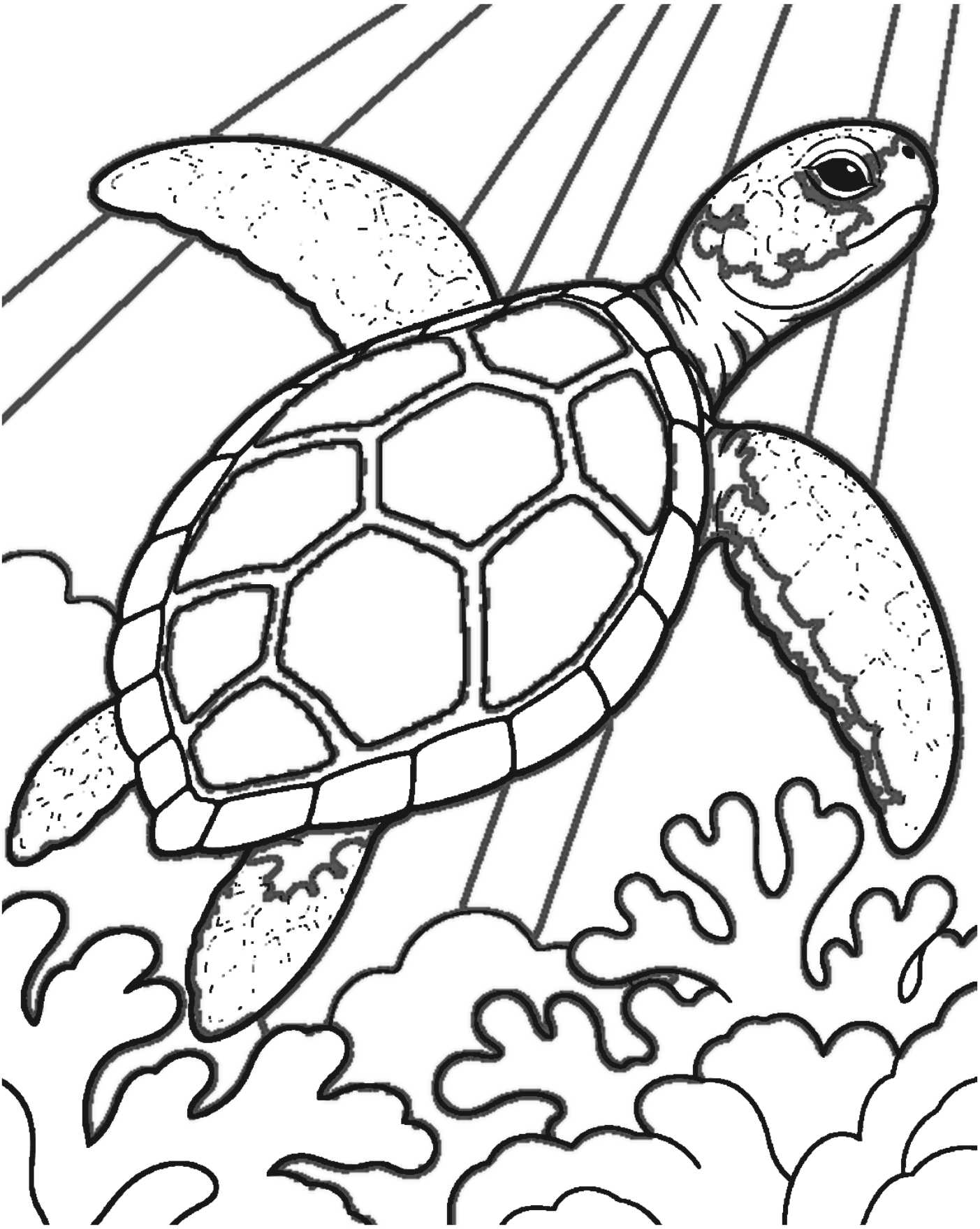
Can an octopus change its skin color?



Did you know? An octopus can make tiny sacs of pigment in its skin expand or shrink. That lets it change its color and pattern quickly. A mottled pattern can help it disappear against rocks as it moves along the reef.

Green Sea Turtle

Why does a sea turtle swim up for air?



Did you know? A green sea turtle has lungs. It can spend a long time underwater, but it must come up to breathe. Its wide front flippers help it pull through the water between trips to the surface.

Hammerhead Shark

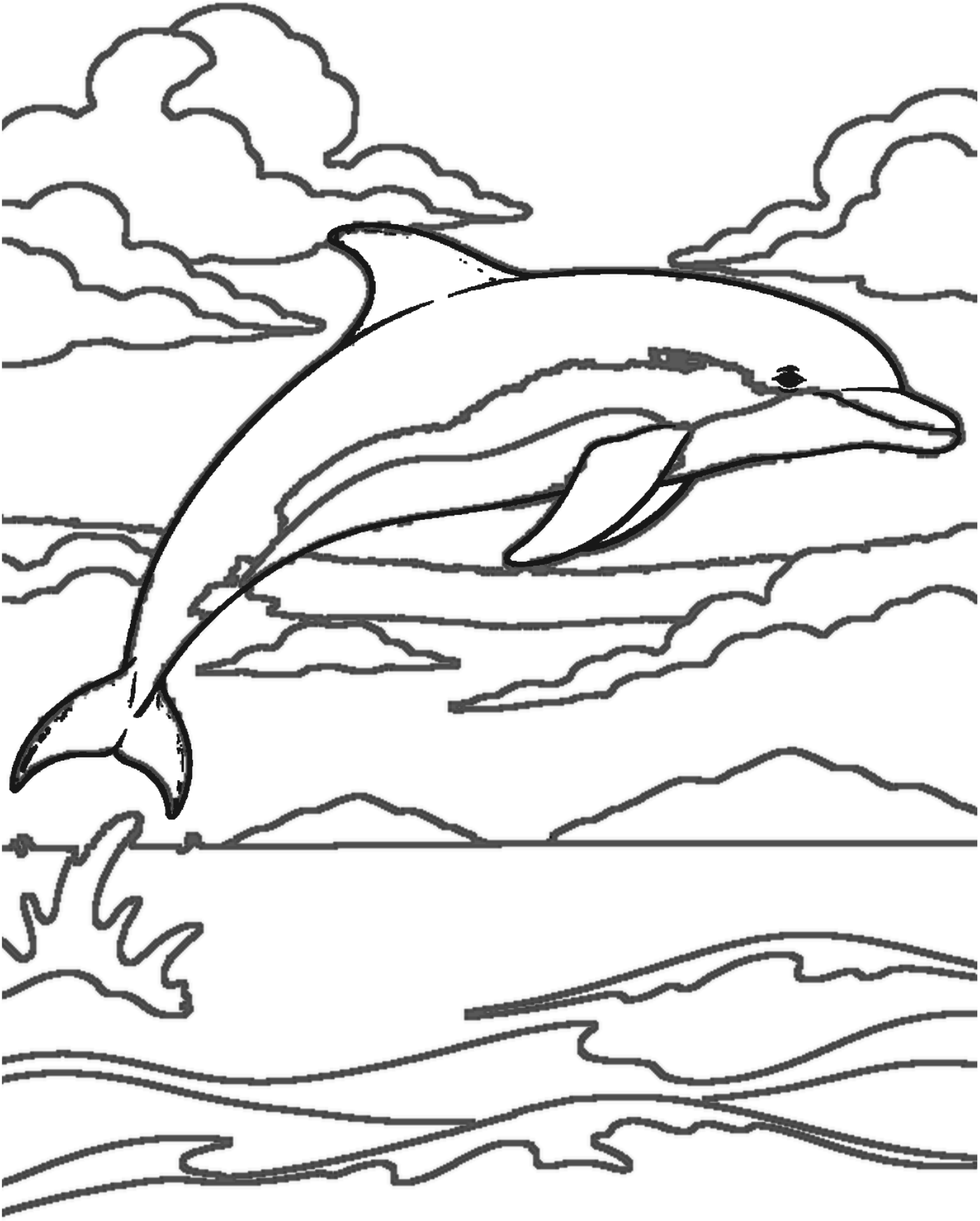
Where are a hammerhead shark's eyes?



Did you know? Its eyes sit far apart at the ends of its wide head. The head also carries tiny organs that can detect faint electrical signals. Those signals can help a hammerhead find prey hidden in sand.

Bottlenose Dolphin

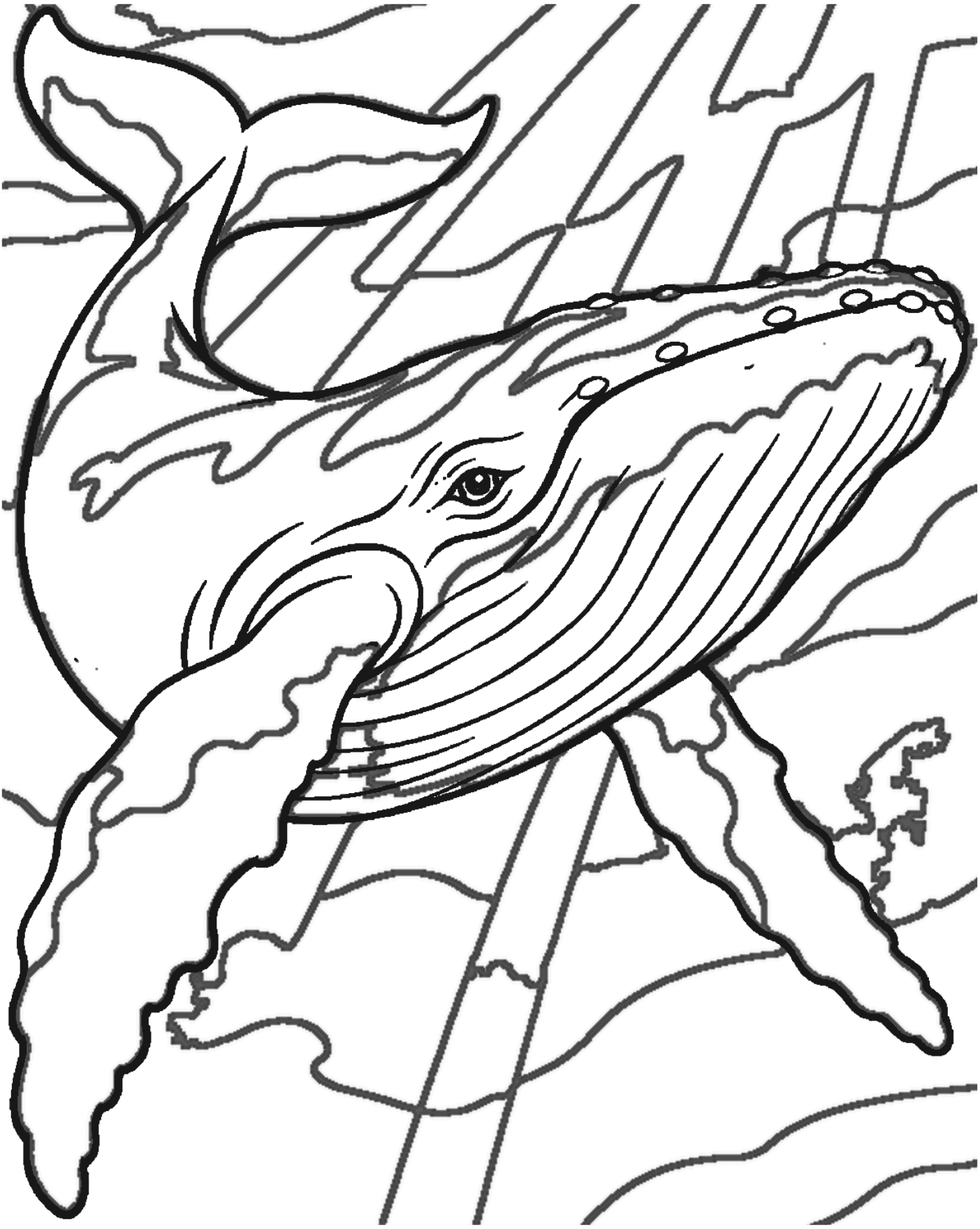
How can a dolphin find its way by sound?



Did you know? A bottlenose dolphin sends out quick clicks and listens for their echoes. The echoes can tell it where an object or a fish is, even when the water is hard to see through. This is called echolocation.

Humpback Whale

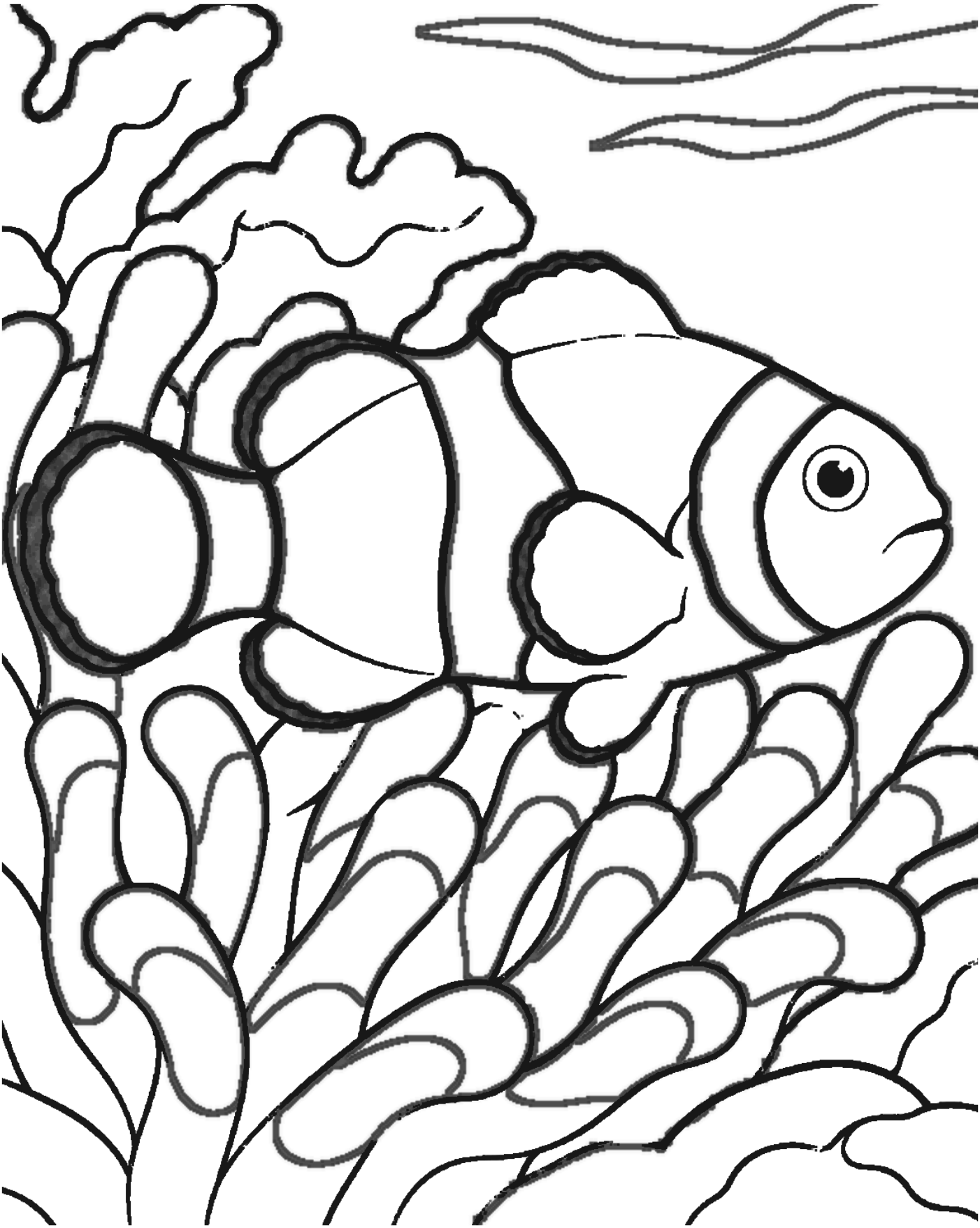
Why does a humpback whale have folds under its mouth?



Did you know? The folds let the throat stretch when the whale takes in a big mouthful of water and prey. The whale pushes the water back out through fringed plates called baleen, which catch food inside its mouth.

Clownfish

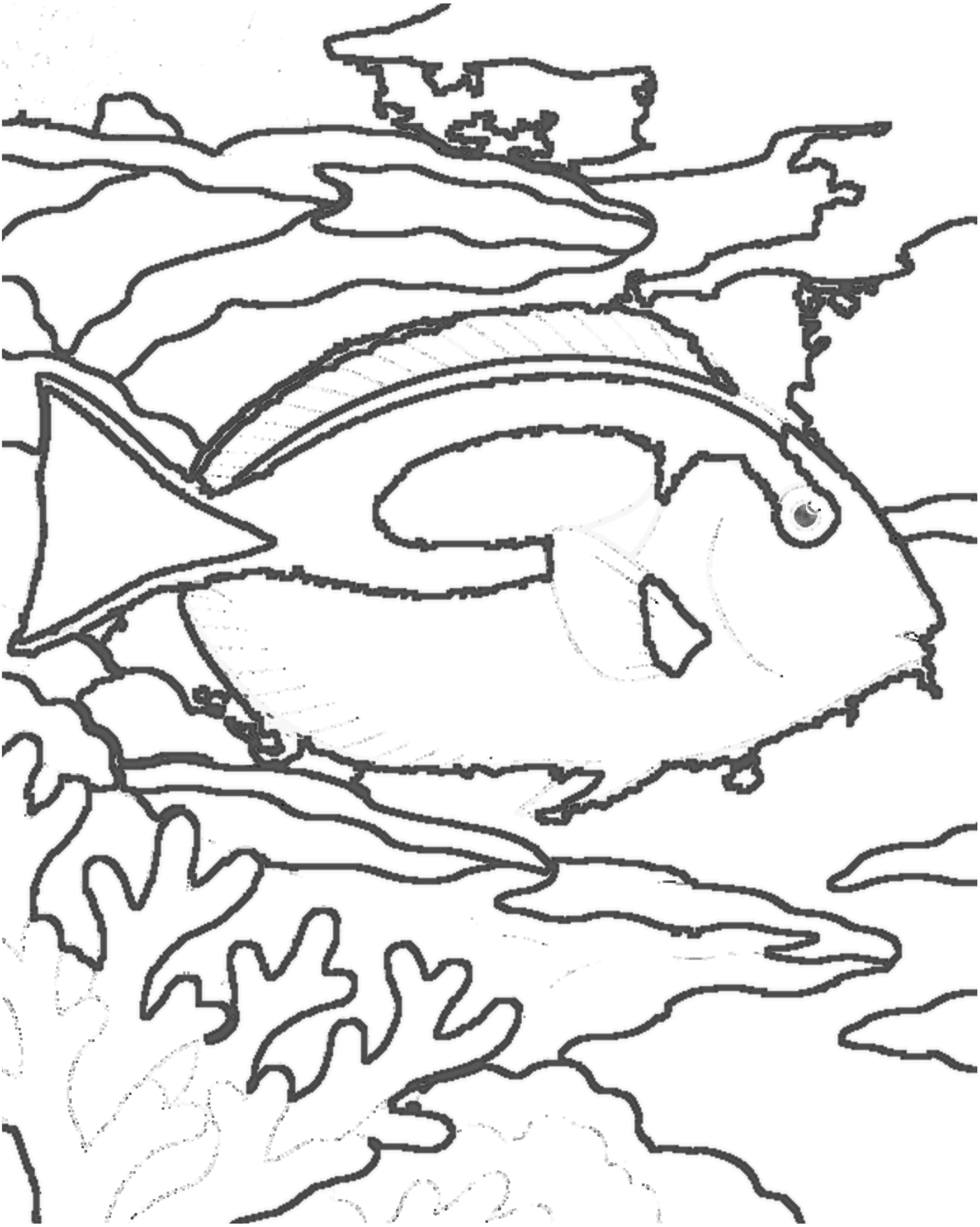
Why can a clownfish hide in a sea anemone?



Did you know? An anemone’s tentacles can sting many fish. A special mucus coating helps protect a clownfish, so it can shelter among the tentacles. The fish can also help its host by chasing away some animals that would nibble it.

Blue Tang

Why is a blue tang called a surgeonfish?



Did you know? Like other surgeonfish, the blue tang has a sharp spine near the base of its tail. The spine looks a little like a surgeon’s blade and can help defend the fish if it is threatened.

Giant Manta Ray

How does a giant manta ray eat tiny food?



Did you know? As it swims, the ray uses flaps beside its mouth to guide water inside. It filters tiny animals called zooplankton from the water. The large fins that look like wings keep it moving through the sea.

Seahorse

Who carries a seahorse's eggs?



Did you know? The male seahorse carries the eggs in a pouch until the young are ready to come out. Seahorses can also curl their tails around seagrass or other objects to hold steady in moving water.

Moon Jelly

What are the four loops inside a moon jelly?



Did you know? The four horseshoe shapes are organs where a moon jelly makes eggs or sperm. You can see them through its clear bell. The bell pulses to move the jelly, though ocean currents often carry it along.

Sea Otter

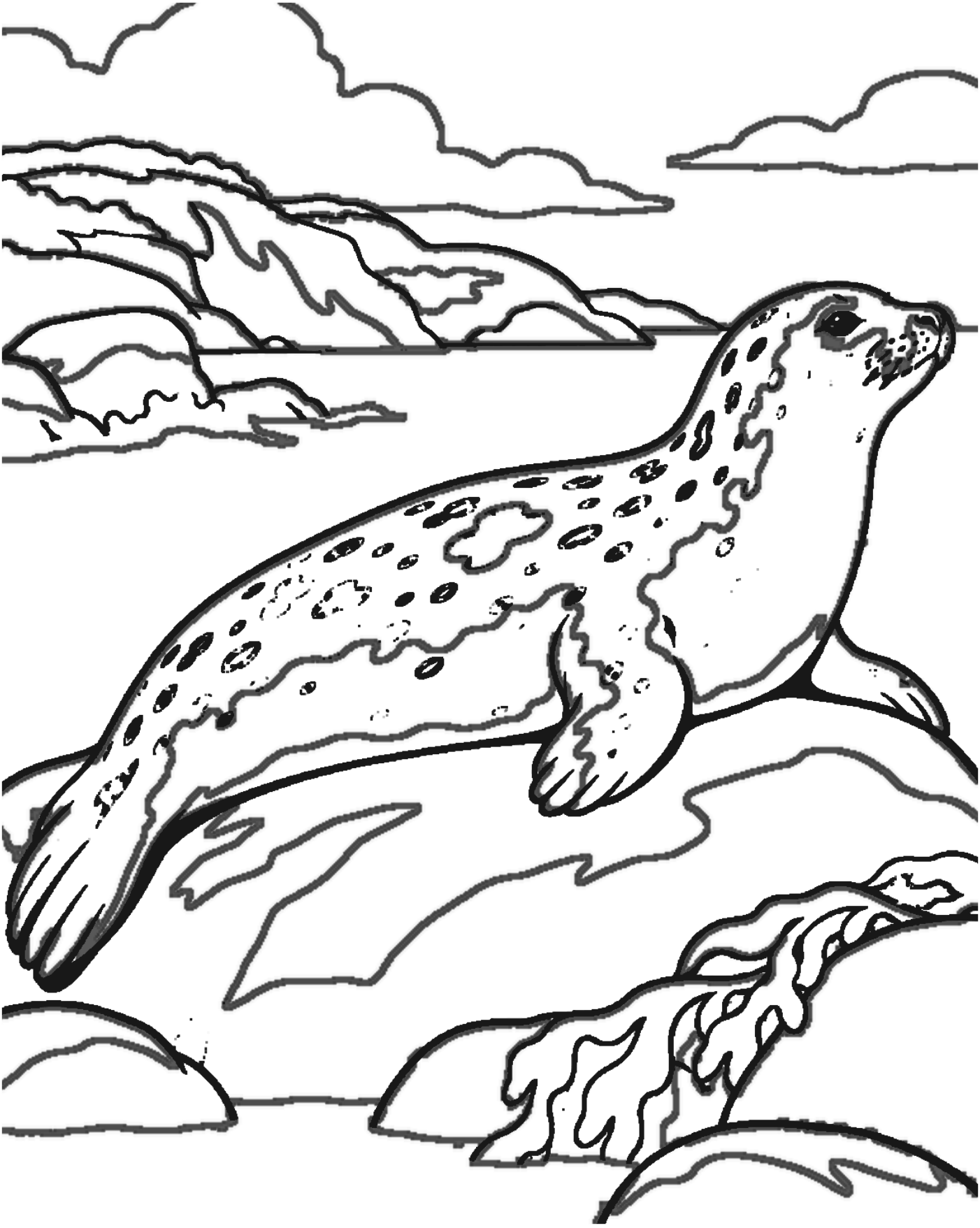
Why might a sea otter carry a stone?



Did you know? A sea otter can use a stone as a tool to break a hard shell. It often floats on its back while it eats, holding food on its belly and using its front paws to steady it.

Harbor Seal

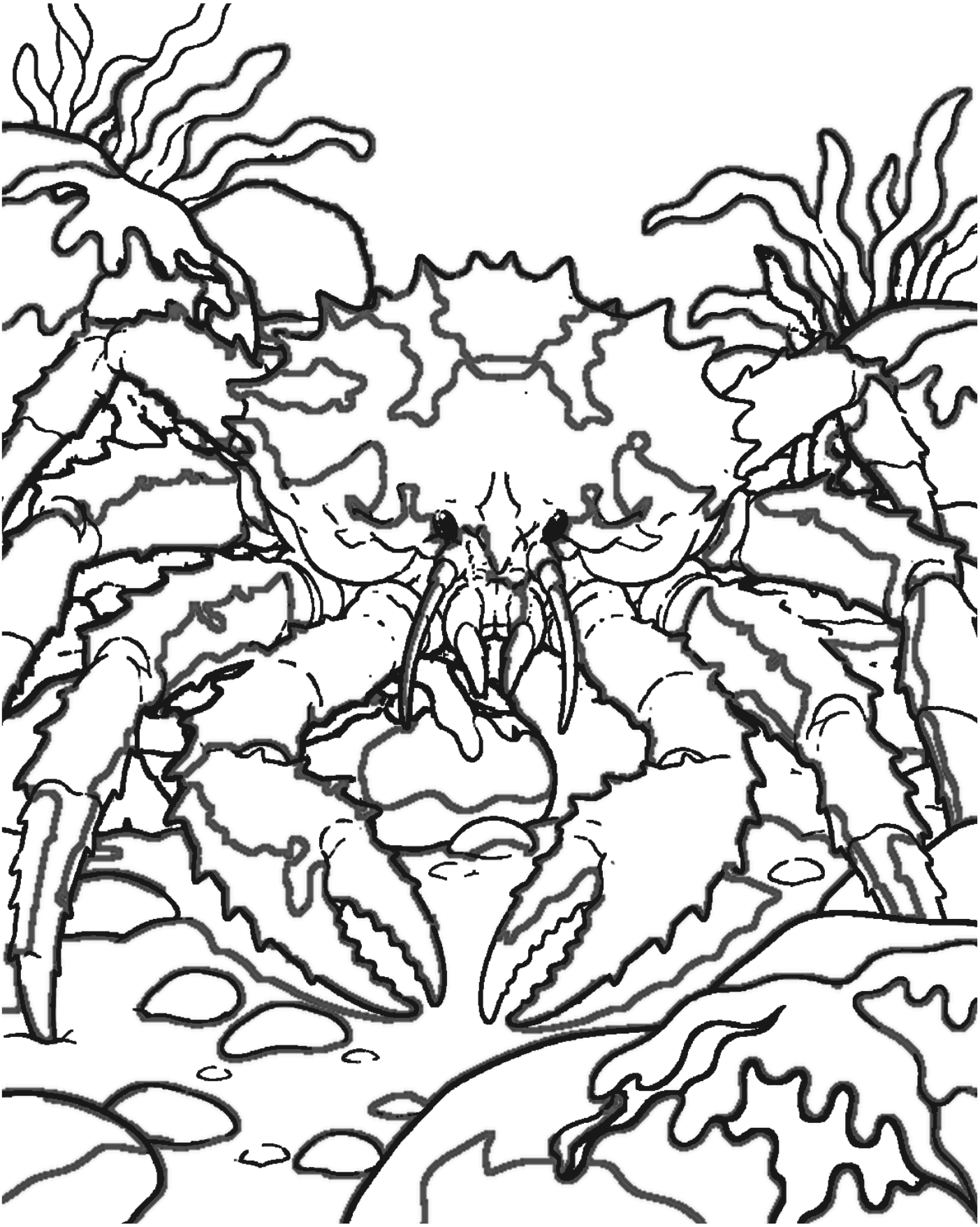
What can a harbor seal feel with its whiskers?



Did you know? A seal’s whiskers can sense tiny movements in water. A fish leaves a trail of moving water behind it, and a seal can use that trail to follow the fish even when it cannot see it well.

Red King Crab

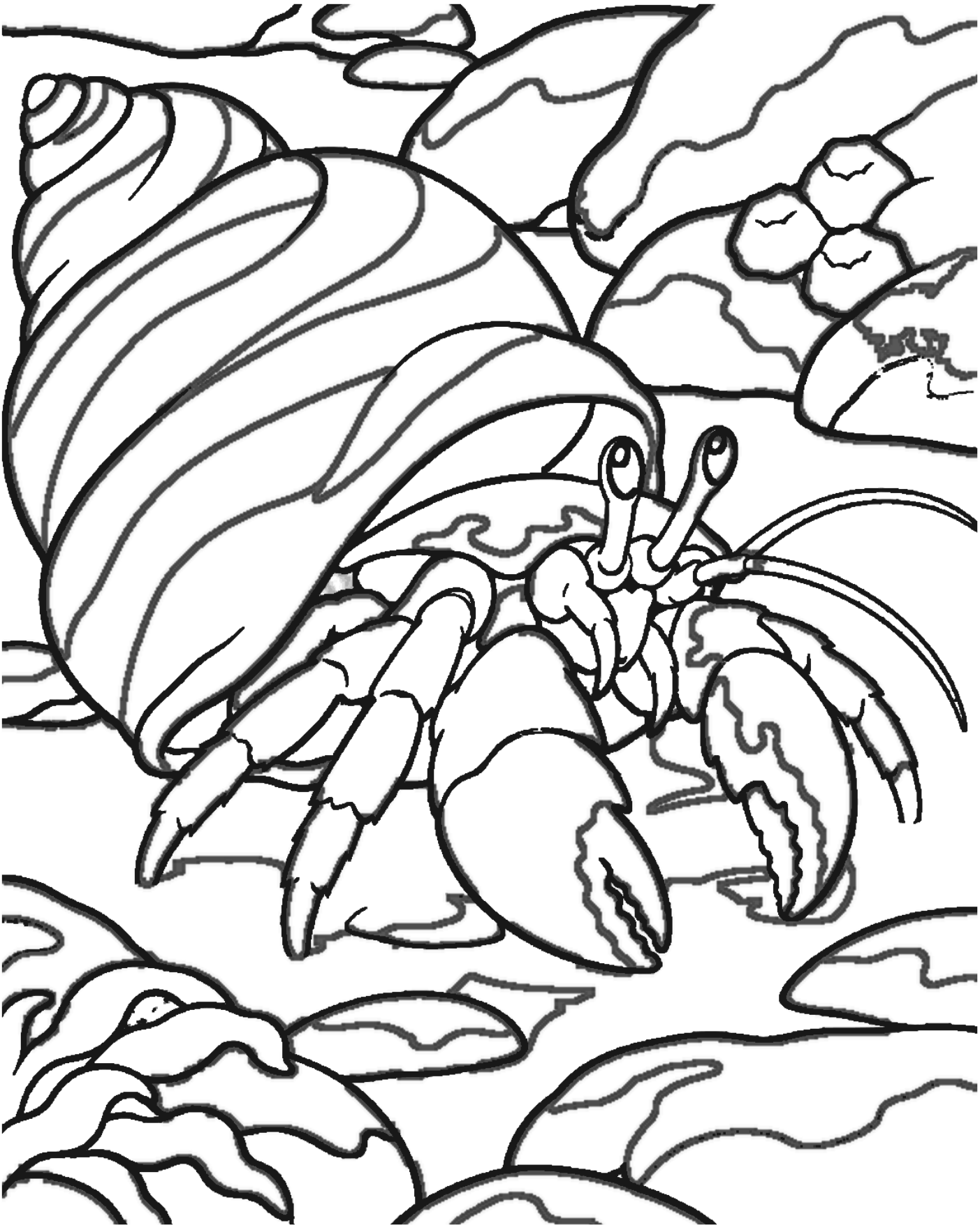
How can a king crab grow inside a hard shell?



Did you know? When a crab gets too big for its outer shell, it sheds it. A soft new shell is already forming underneath. The crab grows before the new shell hardens, a process called molting.

Hermit Crab

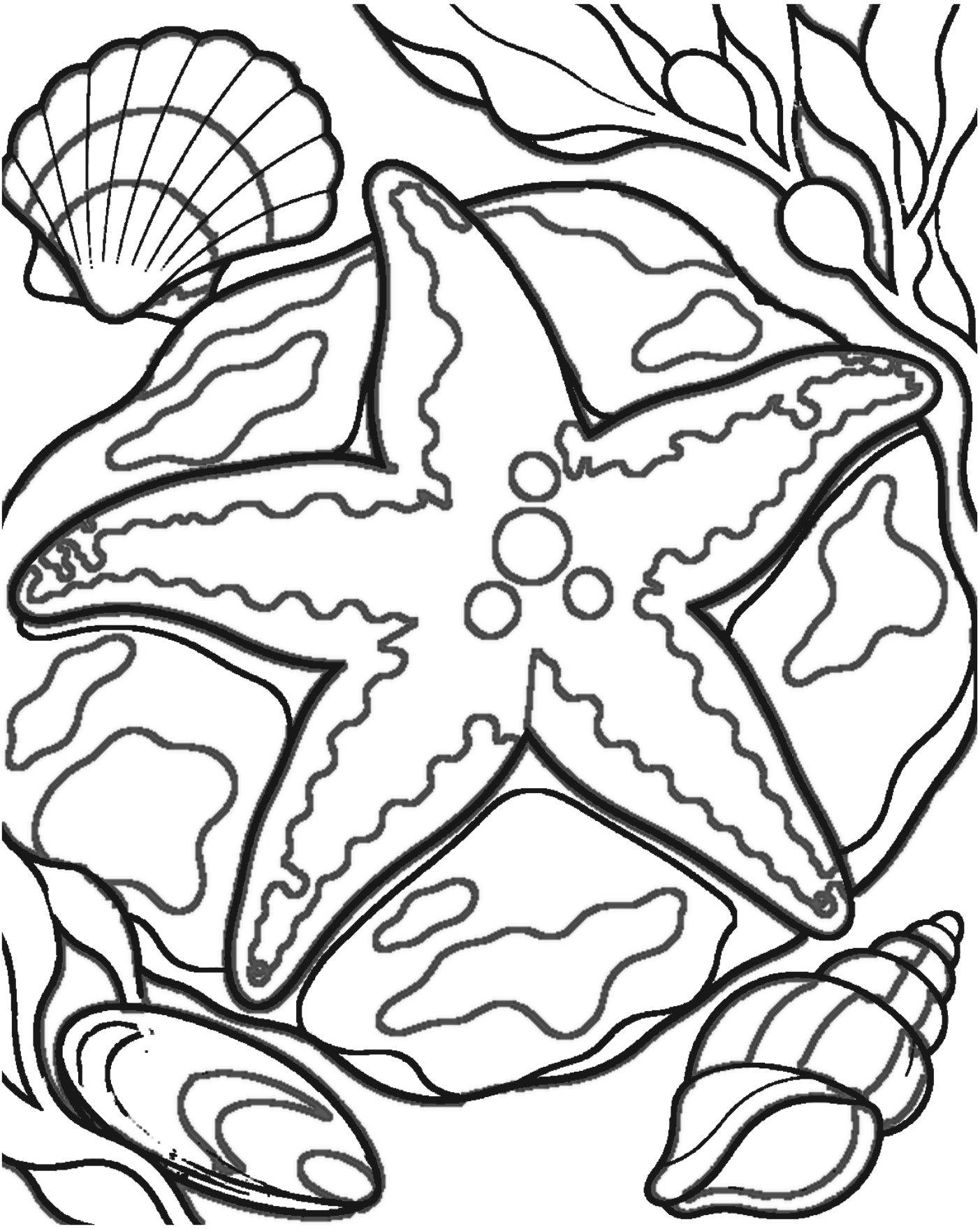
Did the hermit crab make its shell?



Did you know? A hermit crab usually moves into an empty shell left by a sea snail. The shell shields the crab’s soft rear body. As the crab grows, it looks for a larger shell and moves in when it finds one that fits.

Sea Star

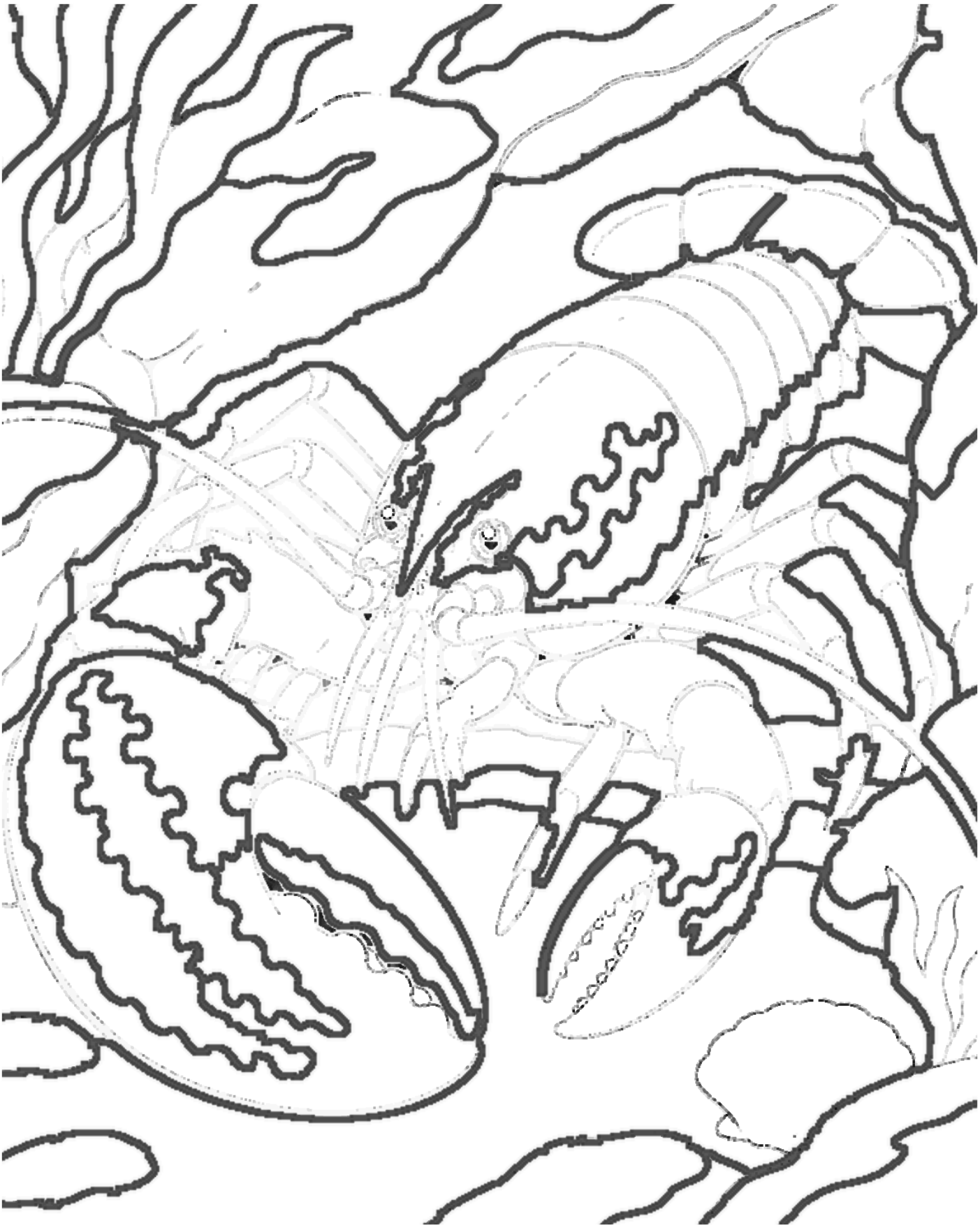
How does a sea star walk across a rock?



Did you know? Rows of small tube feet line the underside of its arms. The feet reach forward, grip the rock and pull the sea star along. Sea stars move these feet using water inside a system of tubes.

American Lobster

Why are a lobster's front claws different?



Did you know? An American lobster has a thick crusher claw for breaking hard food and a slimmer cutter claw for gripping and tearing. The larger claw can grow on either side, so two lobsters can look like mirror images.

Chambered Nautilus

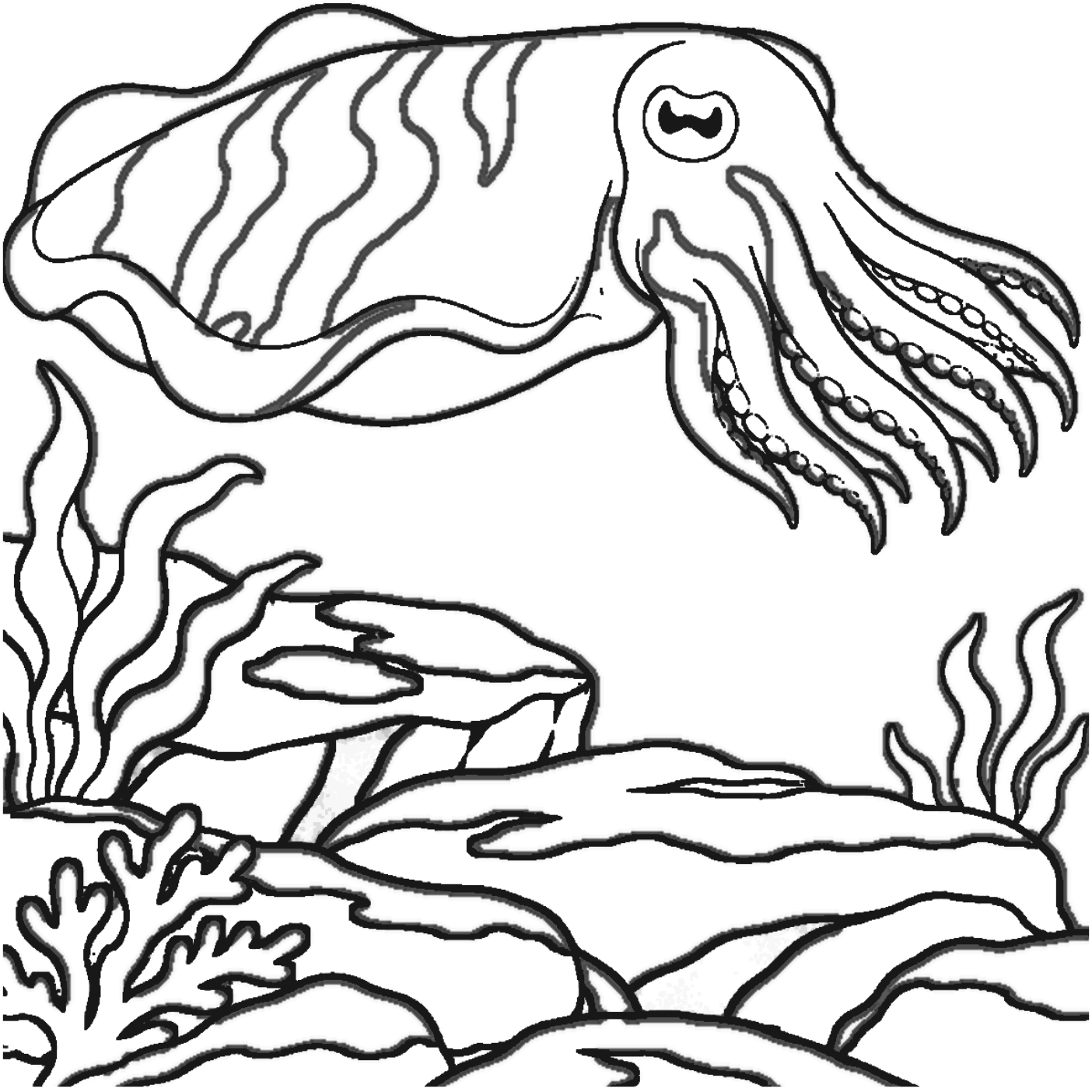
What are the little rooms inside a nautilus shell?



Did you know? The nautilus lives in the largest chamber near the shell’s opening. As it grows, it builds a new space and closes off the old one. Gas and liquid in those older chambers help it stay afloat underwater.

Common Cuttlefish

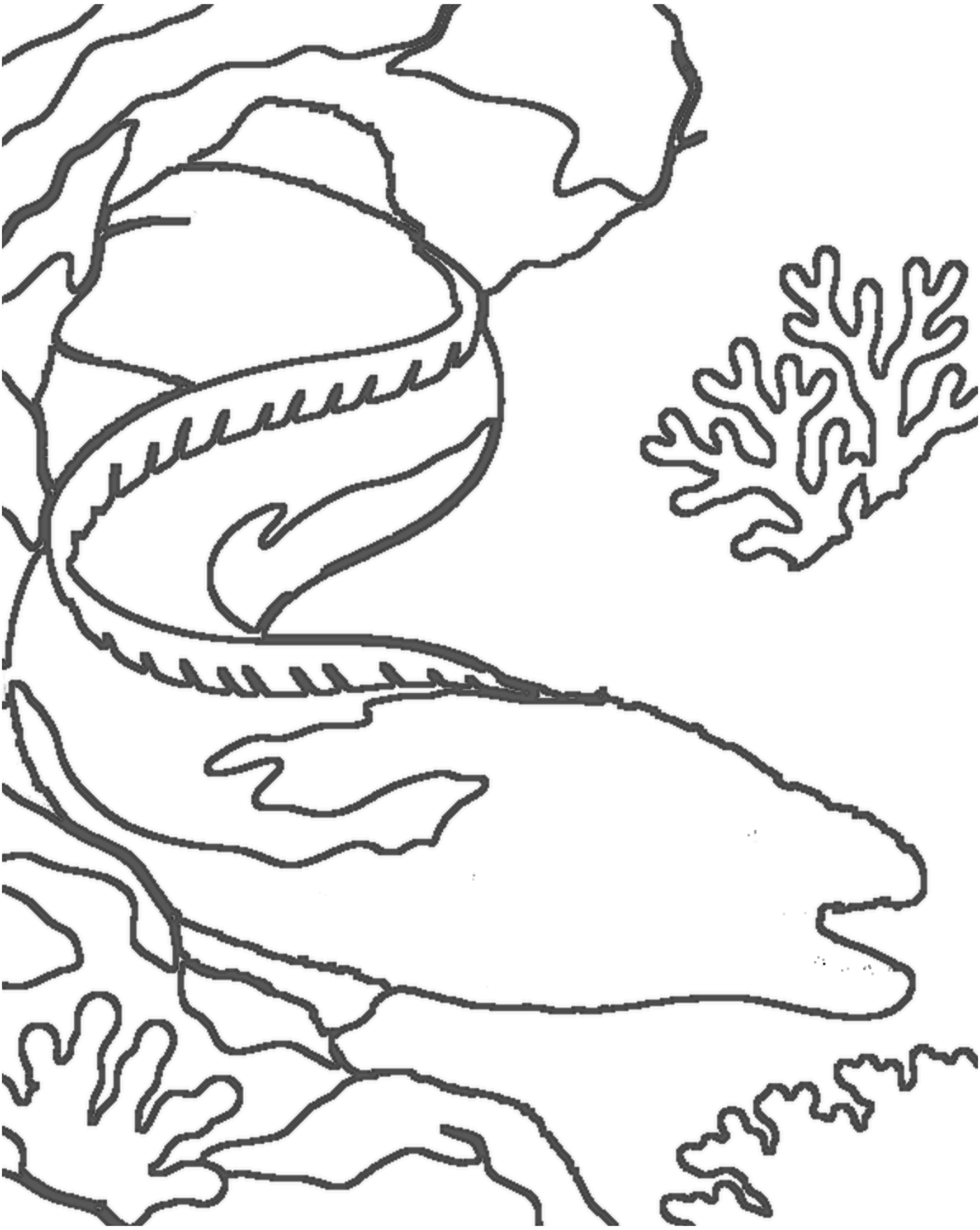
What kind of shell does a cuttlefish have?



Did you know? A cuttlefish carries a chalky shell inside its body. It is called a cuttlebone. Tiny chambers in it help the animal stay at the right depth without having to swim constantly.

Moray Eel

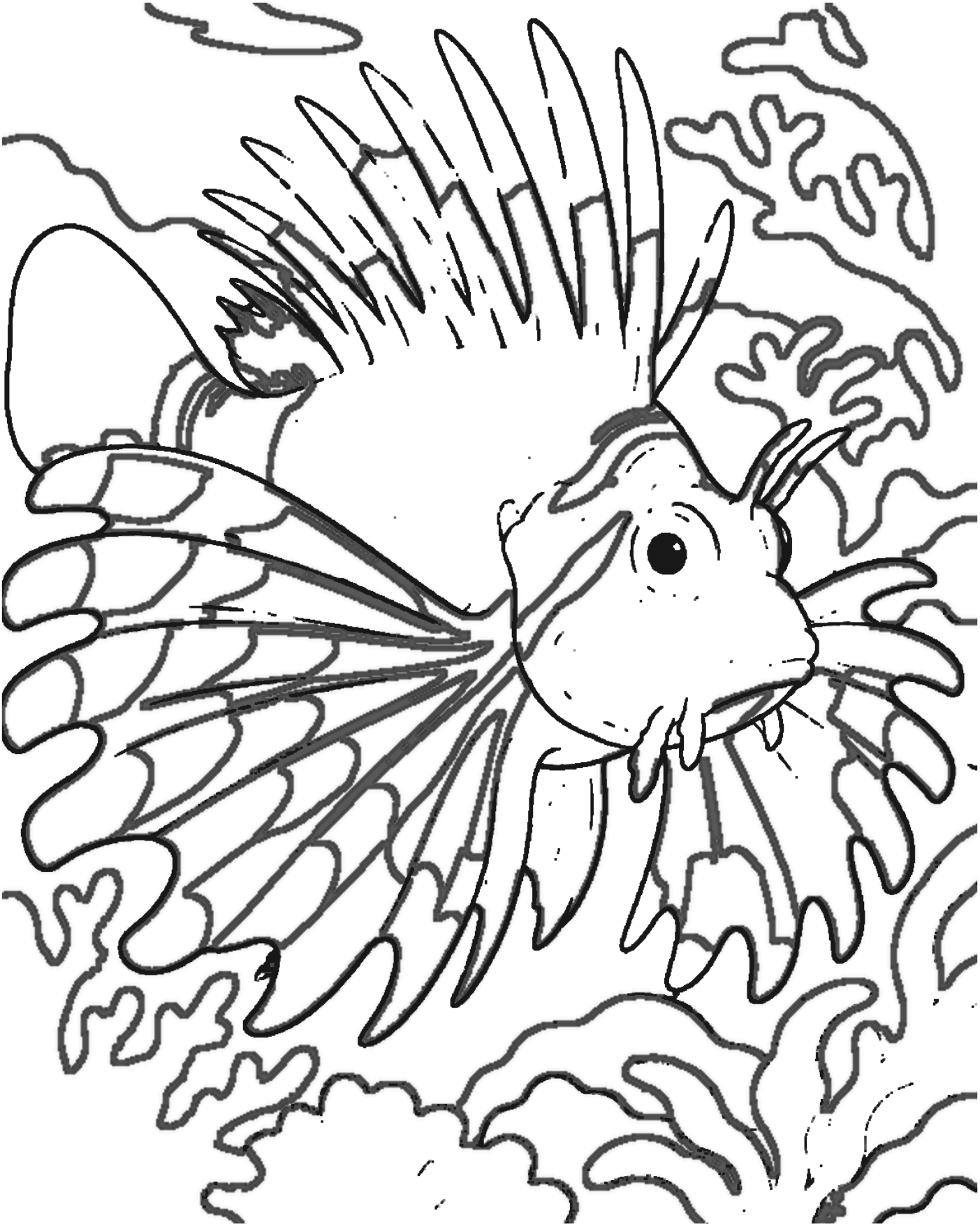
Why does a moray eel open and close its mouth?



Did you know? Opening and closing its mouth moves water across its gills, which take oxygen from the water. An eel can do this while resting quietly in a crevice, even when it is not about to bite.

Lionfish

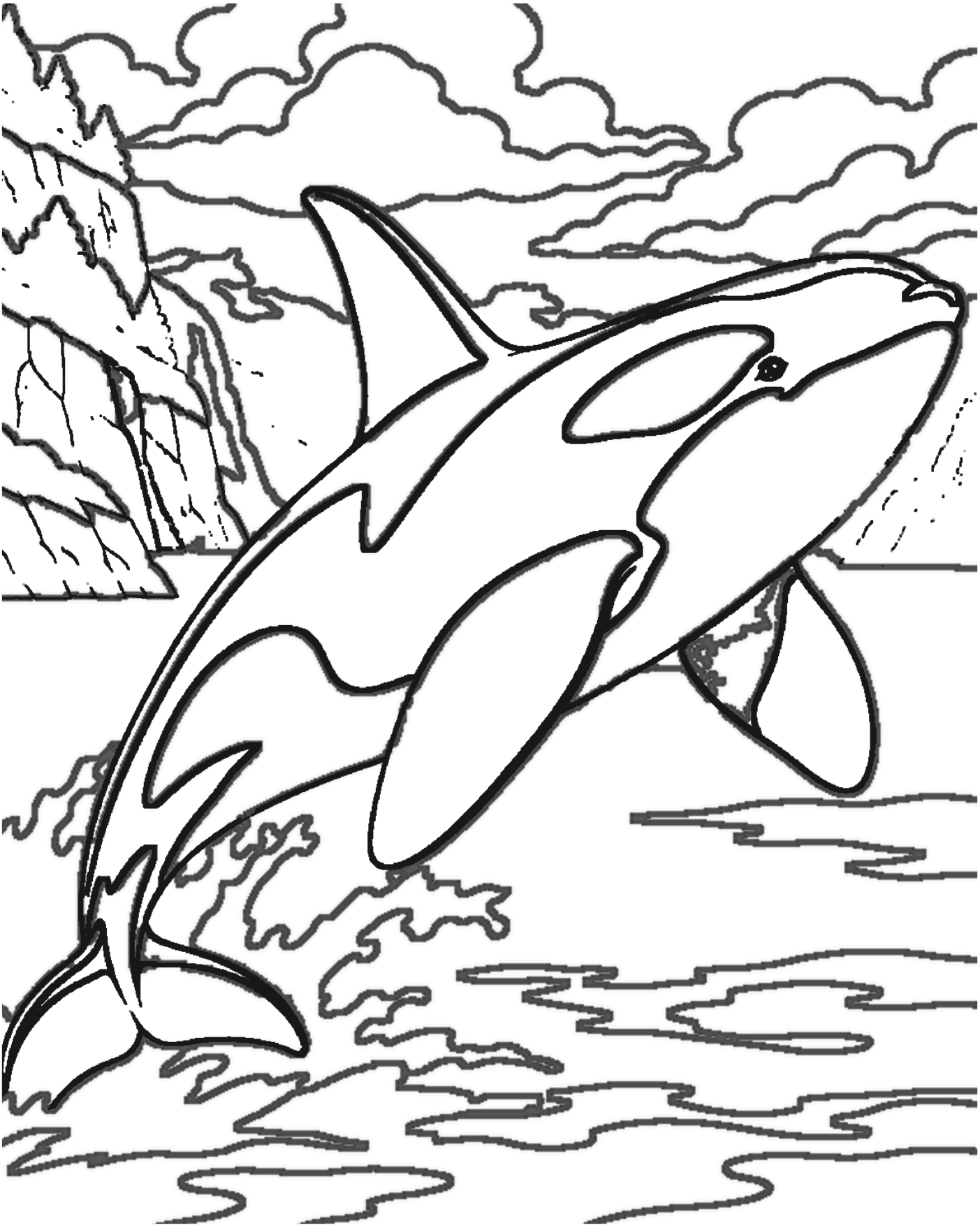
Which parts of a lionfish help protect it?



Did you know? Some spines along a lionfish’s back and underside can deliver venom. Its wide, fanlike side fins are different. A lionfish can spread them out to help herd small fish toward its mouth.

Orca

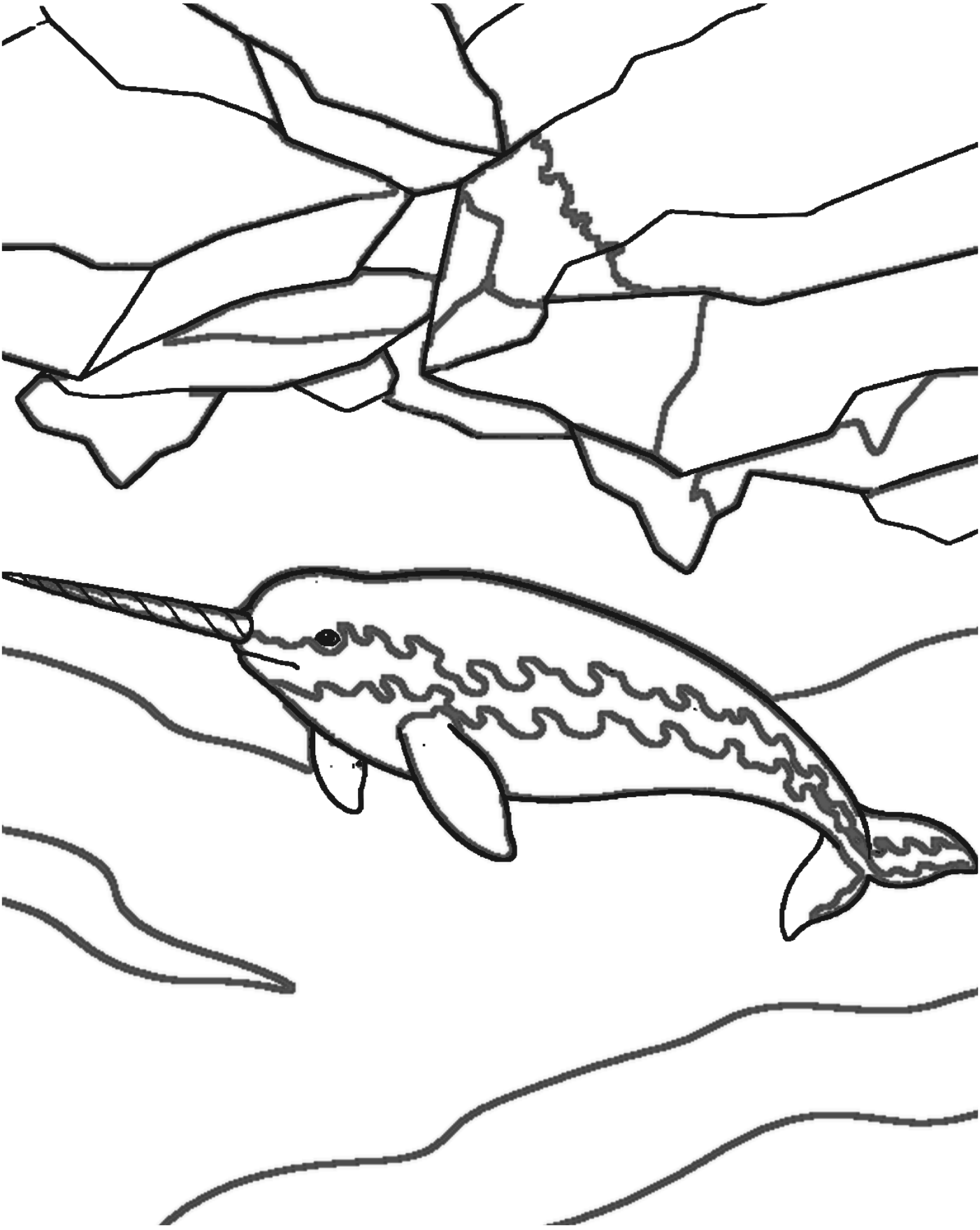
Is an orca a kind of dolphin?



Did you know? Yes. An orca, also called a killer whale, is the largest member of the dolphin family. Look for its dark back, white patch near each eye and the tall fin that stands up from its back.

Narwhal

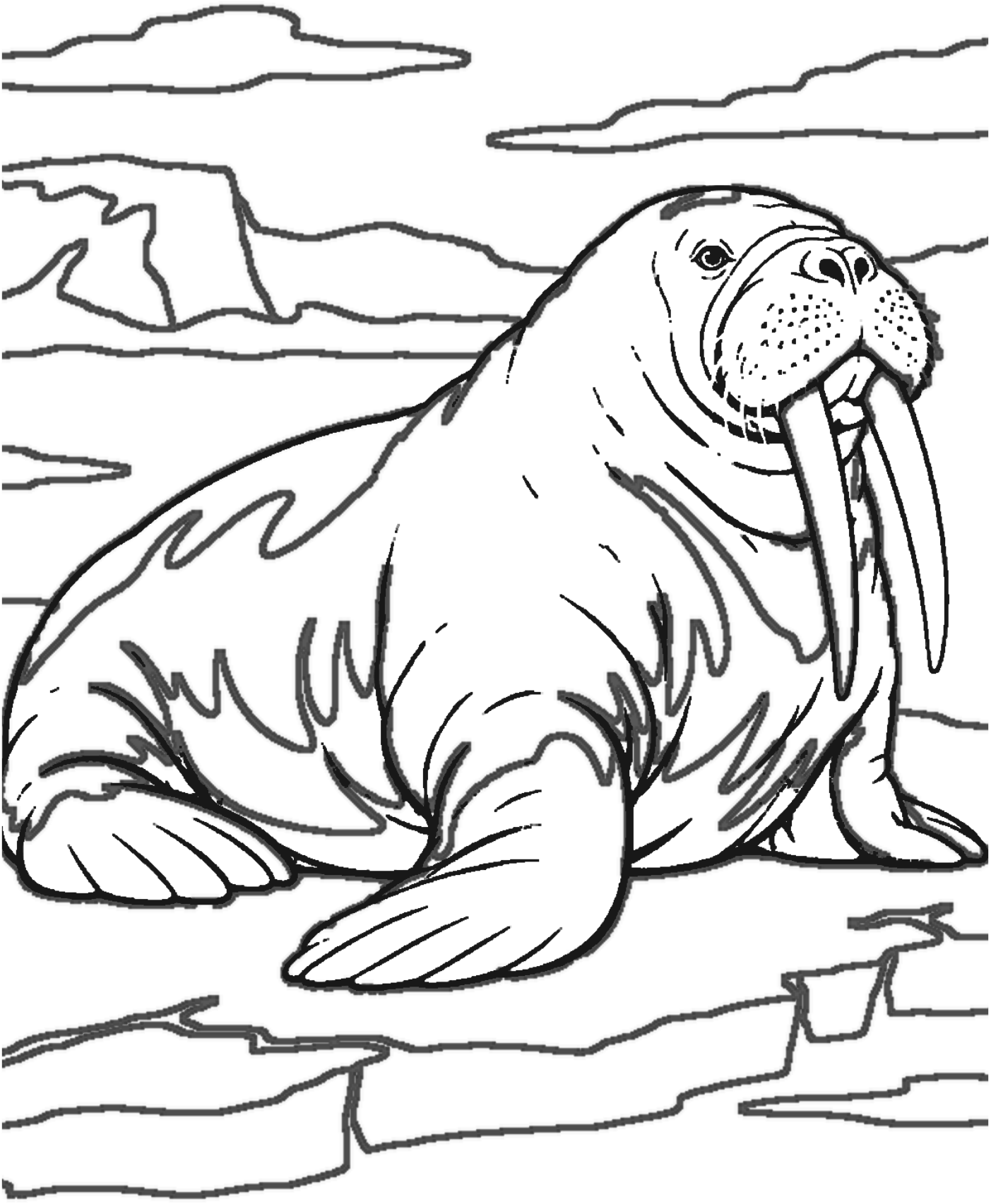
Is a narwhal's tusk a horn?



Did you know? A narwhal tusk is a tooth that grows forward through the upper lip, usually on a male. It often grows in a long spiral. The rest of the narwhal’s rounded head has no horn.

Walrus

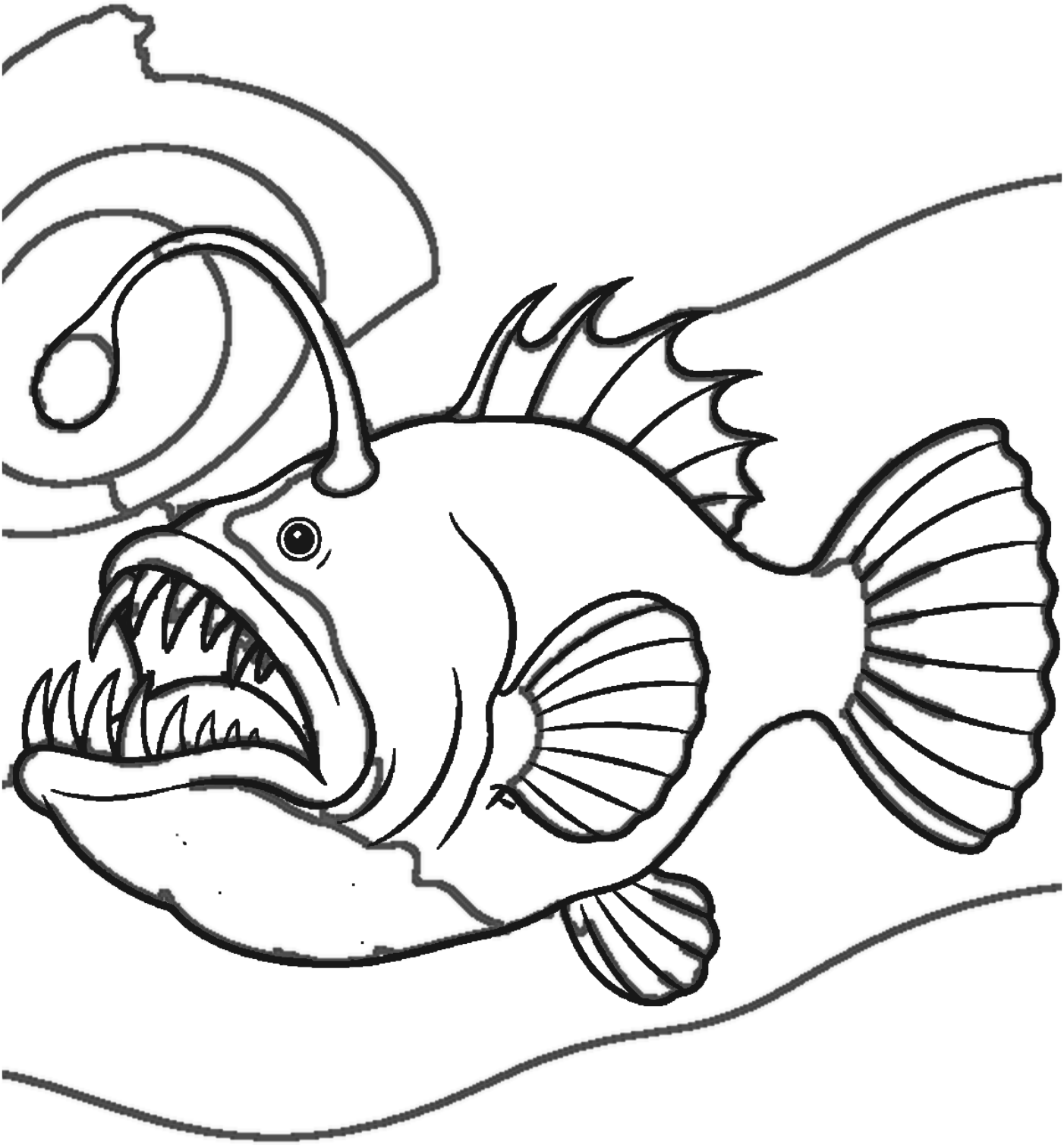
What can a walrus find with its whiskers?



Did you know? A walrus uses its stiff whiskers to feel for food such as clams on the seafloor. It can feel along the sand even when clouds of mud make it hard to see. The long tusks are separate from the whiskers.

Deep-Sea Anglerfish

Why does a deep-sea anglerfish have a light?



Did you know? Sunlight barely reaches the depths where many anglerfish live. A female can wave a glowing lure near her mouth. A curious small animal may swim toward the light and come within reach.

Leafy Seadragon

Do a leafy seadragon's leaf shapes help it swim?



Did you know? Those leafy shapes mostly help the fish blend in with seaweed. Small, nearly clear fins do the swimming. When the fish is still, its outline can be hard to pick out between the real leaves.