

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_

Weekly Reading HW

HW Wk \_\_\_\_

*Directions: Read and annotate the passage below. Then answer the questions.*

### A Bird Whose Life Depends on a Crab

While horseshoe crabs have been around for 475 million years, they may not be around for much longer. The number of horseshoe crabs has decreased because we've been catching too many to use for research. This has meant trouble not only for the birds that feast on the crabs' eggs, but for us as well.

Horseshoe crabs emerge from waters along the East Coast at night in the spring to spawn, or lay their eggs, on sandy beaches. Arriving not far behind them are many small reddish-colored birds, known as red knots. They show up to feast on the crab eggs before continuing their migration.

Just as the red knots depend on the crabs for food, we depend on them for their blood. The biomedical industry extracts blood from horseshoe crabs because it is extremely sensitive to toxins that can cause illness in humans. The blood is used to test for contamination in an array of drugs and medical devices, like vaccines. After some blood is taken, the horseshoe crabs are released back into the water, however, many die as a result of the process. Last year, at least 15%, or 79,800 died but the number is most likely higher. Demand for the blood is increasing as demand for medical devices and drugs continues to rise. The decline in horseshoe crabs also affects the red knot population, which is in danger of extinction.

Other threats also loom both for the red knot and horseshoe crab. The sea is becoming increasingly acidic as we pump more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This negatively affects the food available for horseshoe crabs. Erosion and storms are becoming more intense with global warming, threatening the beaches used by horseshoe crabs and red knots.

We need to address threats to the red knots before a bad storm or bad spawning season for crabs pushes the birds closer to extinction. Regulators can begin by reducing horseshoe crab death in the biomedical industry. The rest of us can protect what is left of our coasts. As seas rise and storms become more intense, we're not the only ones with something precious to lose.



A horseshoe crab

1. (RST.9-10.2) The main idea of the passage is that:
  - a. Horseshoe crabs have saved the lives of millions because their blood is used to test for contamination in medicines.
  - b. Humans are causing a decline in the horseshoe crab population which then negatively affects the red knot population.
  - c. Global warming is the only cause for the decrease in horseshoe crab and red knot populations.
  - d. Red knots are causing horseshoe crabs to disappear because they are eating all of their eggs.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

2. (RST.9-10.1) It can reasonably be inferred that after horseshoe crabs lay their eggs in the sand:
  - a. They look for food to feed their offspring when they hatch.
  - b. They stay on the beach guarding the eggs until they hatch.
  - c. They fight off the red knots from eating all of their eggs.
  - d. They return to the ocean and hope all of their eggs hatch.
  
3. (RST.9-10.4) As it is used in the passage, the term *array* means:
  - a. Abundance
  - b. A beam
  - c. Lack
  - d. Assortment
  
4. (RST.9-10.1) The author’s purpose in writing the last paragraph is best described as showing:
  - a. The different ways that we can protest the biomedical industry.
  - b. The number of ways in which people and things are affecting the horseshoe crab population.
  - c. How we can intervene to save the red knots and horseshoe crabs before it is too late.
  - d. The dangers of living in a world without horseshoe crabs and red knots.

5. (RST.9-10.1) How do humans affect the horseshoe crab population?

---

---

---

---

6. (RST.9-10.2) Aside from humans, what else is affecting the horseshoe crab population?

---

---

---

---

---

*Adapted from the article, “A Bird Whose Life Depends on a Crab” by Deborah Cramer for The New York Times, on November 26, 2013.*