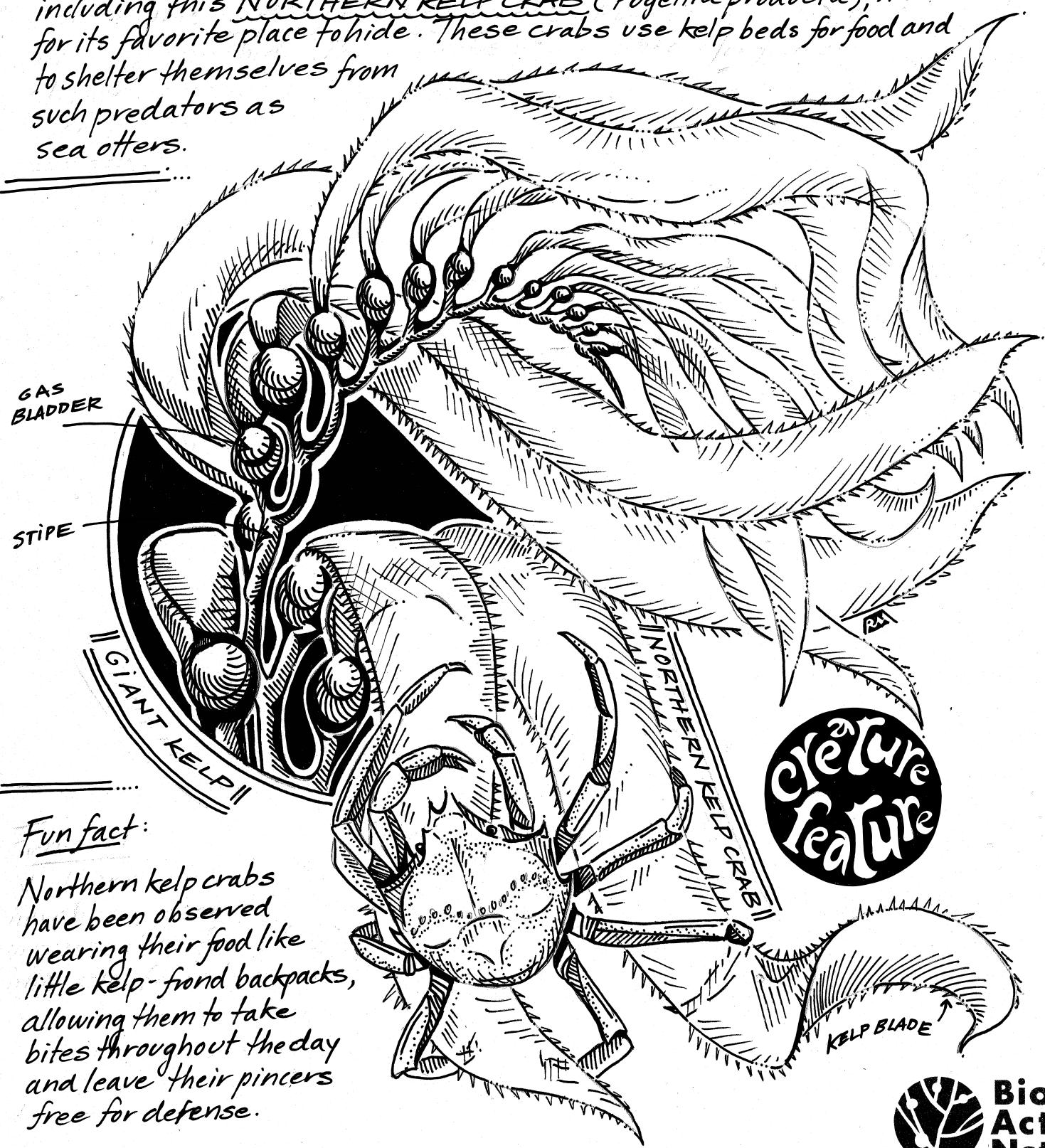


Behold, the GIANT KELP (*Macrocystis pyrifera*): a massive perennial alga that, under ideal conditions, can grow about 60 centimeters each day and eventually reach a staggering height of 53 meters. (For comparison, the Leaning Tower of Pisa is 56 meters tall!) The towering underwater forests created by giant kelp serve as vibrant and critical habitats for countless marine organisms, including this NORTHERN KELP CRAB (*Pugettia producta*), named for its favorite place to hide. These crabs use kelp beds for food and to shelter themselves from such predators as sea otters.



Fun fact:

Northern kelp crabs have been observed wearing their food like little kelp-frond backpacks, allowing them to take bites throughout the day and leave their pincers free for defense.