

Shrimps that can see more colours than humans

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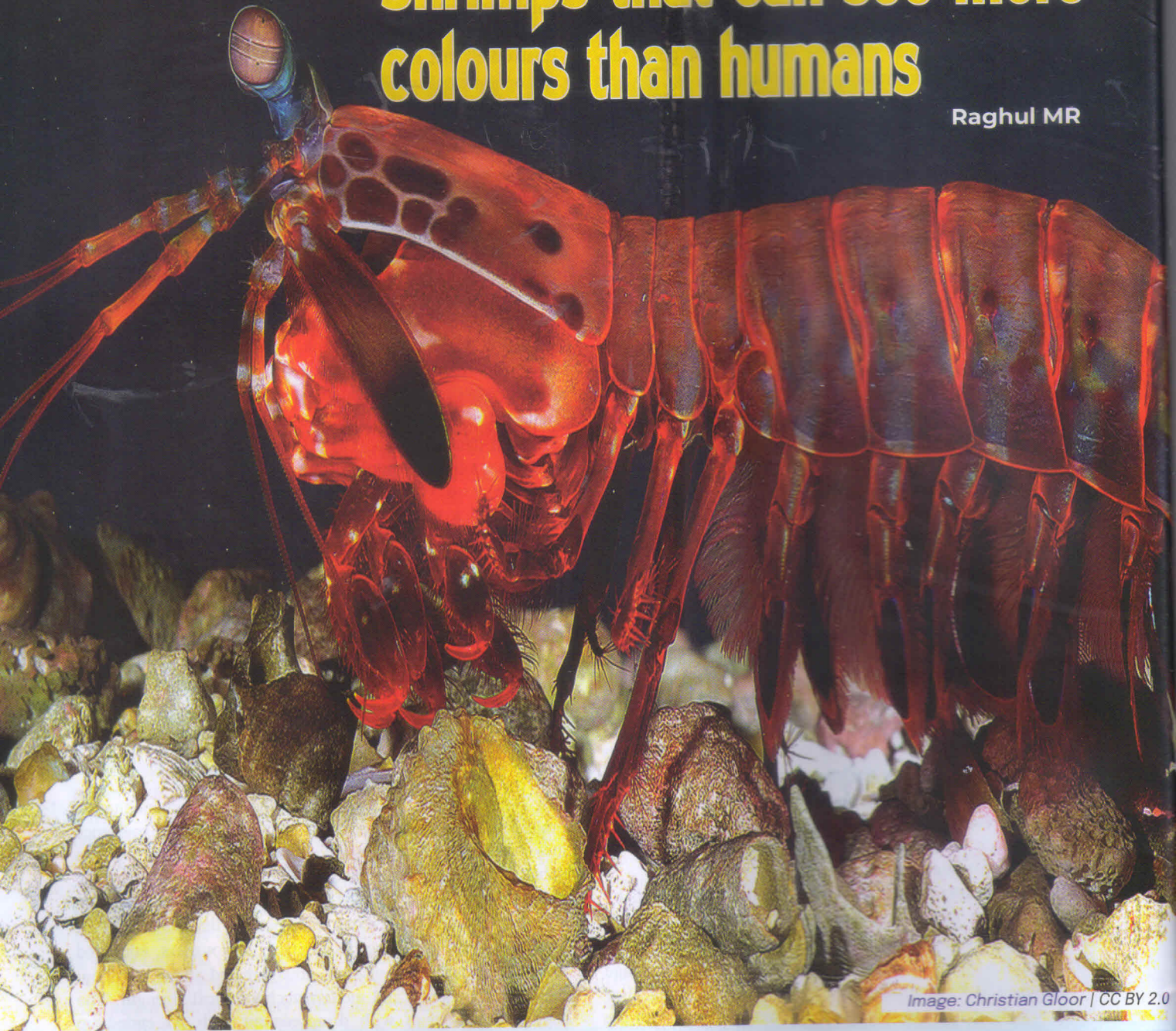


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Close-up of Japanese mantis shrimp eyes

FOR Australians, they are *prawn killers*, whereas, for the Caribbeans, they are *thumb splitters*. Found in tropical and subtropical waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, these carnivorous crustaceans are commonly called Mantis Shrimps, and they are known for their one of the most complex visual systems in the animal kingdom. Moreover, they possess the ability to perceive a broad spectrum of light wavelengths, including ultraviolet ones.

Popularly known for their violent attacks, mantis shrimps also have one of the most complex eyes in the animal kingdom.

In humans, we have three known types of photoreceptor cells in the retina that help create sight, whereas mantis shrimps have more than 16 types of photoreceptor cells. It allows them to see more of the light spectrum, including ultraviolet. They can even see the polarised properties of light, enabling them to see patterns of light that are invisible to most of the other creatures in the animal kingdom. This ability aids in communication, navigation, and even hunting, as they can spot camouflaged prey by detecting the polarised light reflected off their bodies.