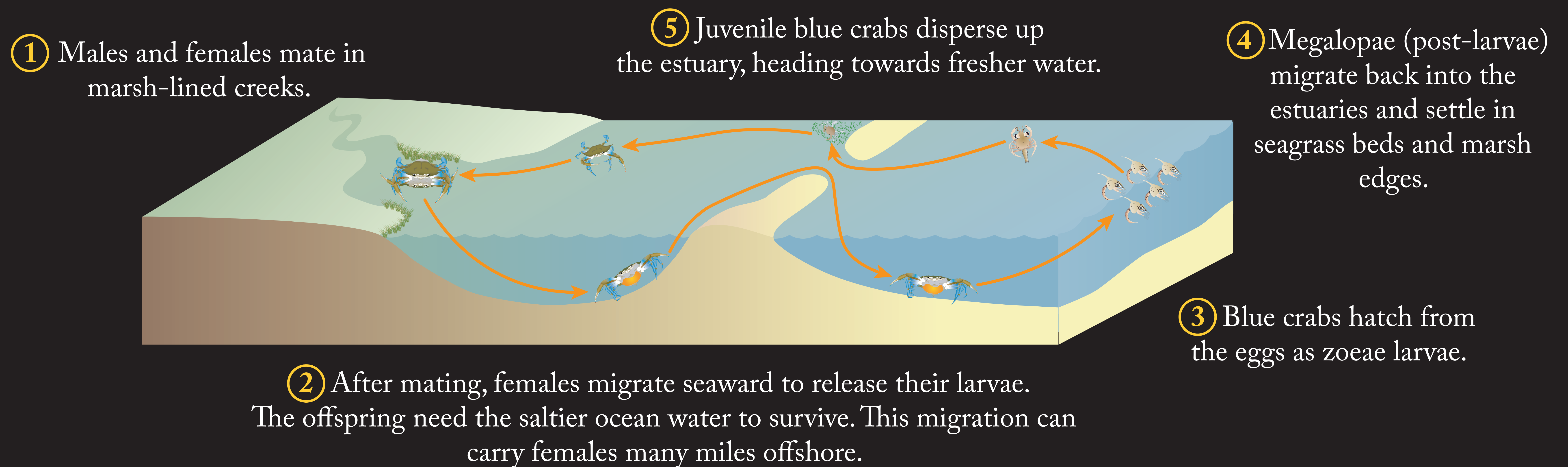
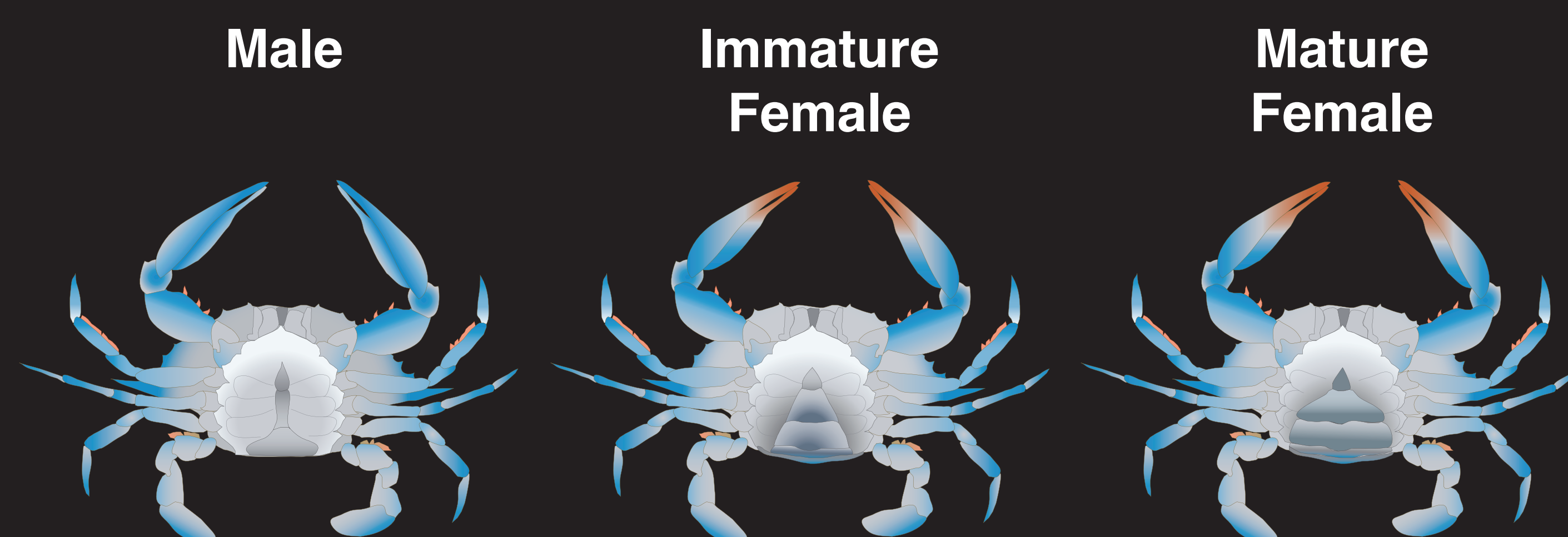


# The Migratory Life Cycle of the Blue Crab, *Callinectes sapidus*



## Male or female?



Male blue crabs have a pointed abdomen, shaped like the Washington Monument. Female blue crabs have a triangular abdomen when immature, but the abdomen becomes broad and rounded when mature, shaped like the U.S. Capitol building.

## What is the 'sponge' under some female crabs?



Female blue crabs carry their egg mass underneath their abdomen for 10–14 d until the eggs are ready to hatch. Each egg mass, or sponge, contains millions of eggs, and a female blue crab can produce more than 5 egg masses in her lifetime. The egg mass starts out orange in color, but changes to brown and then black as the eggs develop.