

A Field Guide to Intertidal NE Crabs

Native and invasive crab species commonly found in the intertidal zone in northern New England



1 JONAH CRAB

2 ROCK CRAB

3 GREEN CRAB

4 ASIAN SHORE CRAB



PURPOSE

The purpose of this field guide is to help identify the native and invasive crab species most commonly found in the intertidal zone in northern New England. This guide is also a tool for conducting intertidal green crab quadrat surveys. The protocol for these surveys can be found at manomet.org/project/fisheries/.

OVERVIEW

The two native crab species that can be found in the intertidal zone are the rock crab (*Cancer irroratus*) and the Jonah crab (*Cancer borealis*).

The two invasive crab species commonly found in the intertidal zone are the European green crab (*Carcinus maenas*) and the Asian shore crab (*Hemigrapsus sanguineus*).

Common identifying features:

- » **Green crab:** 5 spines or 'teeth' on either side of eyes, 3 spines/teeth in between eyes.
- » **Asian shore crab:** 3 spines on either side of eyes and distinct banding on legs
- » **Jonah crab:** bumpy, non-distinct spines
- » **Rock crab:** smooth, pointed spines

Sex distinction: broadly, male crabs have a narrow, pointed, triangular abdomen or 'apron' and female crabs have a wider more beehive shaped abdomen. Distinctions within species shown below.



A Field Guide to Intertidal NE Crabs

Native Crabs



CANCER BOREALIS (JONAH CRAB)
Bumpy spines.



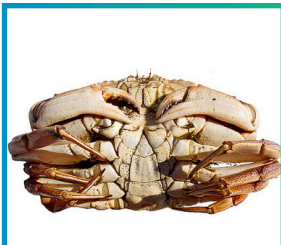
MALE



FEMALE



CANCER IRRORATUS (ROCK CRAB)
Smooth spines.



MALE



FEMALE

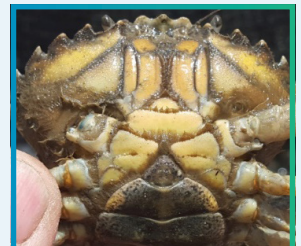
Invasive Crabs



CARCINUS MAENAS (GREEN CRAB)
Five spines on each side of eyes.



MALE



FEMALE



HEMIGRAPUS SANGUINEUS (ASIAN SHORE CRAB)
Three spines on each side of eyes. Distinct banding on legs.



MALE



FEMALE