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Carcinus maenas
European Green Crab

- Typically dark green or green-yellow with dark mottling, but sometimes dark brown or red
- Carapace up to 3.5 inches wide with five spines on each side and three spines between eyes
- Common in sheltered coastal habitats, including estuaries, salt marshes, sandy beaches, and rocky shores
- Native to the coasts of Europe and North Africa, first observed in New England in the mid-1800s
- May reduce shellfish abundance, destabilize creek banks in salt marshes, and disturb eelgrass beds



Cristina Kennedy



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Hemigrapsus sanguineus
Asian Shore Crab

- Often orange-brown, also olive green, maroon, or purple with light and dark bands on legs
- Square-shaped carapace up to 2 inches wide with three spines on each side and no spines between eyes
- Common in the intertidal, tolerant of a wide range of salinities and temperatures
- Native to the north Pacific coasts of Asia, first observed in New England in the 1990s

To differentiate the region's crabs, it is helpful to take careful note of the shape of the carapace (the shell containing the body of the crab) and the number of spines on each side of the eyes. See the back of this card for an illustration of the carapaces of select species. Both *C. maenas* and *H. sanguineus* occur throughout New England.

Similar Species



Maria Conchita

Callinectes sapidus
Blue Crab



Adrienne Pappal

Cancer spp.
Jonah and Atlantic Rock Crabs



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Cristina Kennedy

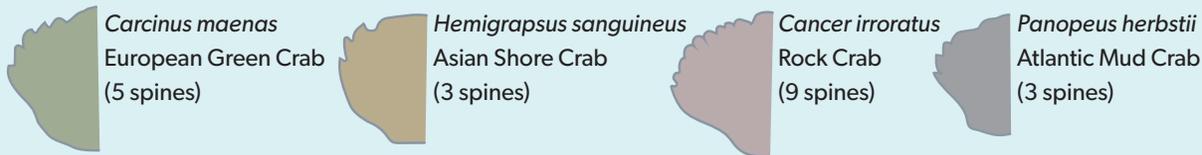
Family Panopeidae
Mud Crabs

- Green-blue with long front legs and large, slender blue claws
- Distinct flared carapace up to 9 inches wide with a long last spine
- Swimming crab with paddle-like hind legs
- More abundant south of Cape Cod, becoming more common north

- *C. borealis* (Jonah Crab, left) and *C. irroratus* (Rock Crab, right) are reddish brown or light purple with nine spines on each side of their carapace
- Both can grow to a large size (carapace up to 5 inches wide), especially in deeper waters
- *C. borealis* has bumpy spines, *C. irroratus* has smooth spines
- Both are found in intertidal to deeper waters throughout New England

- Dark to light brown with large, dark-tipped claws, three spines on sides of carapace
- Small (carapace width up to 1.5 inches)
- Common in muddy habitat and on docks
- Close inspection is required to distinguish between the common mud crab species in New England, including *Dyspanopeus sayi* (Say Mud Crab) and *Panopeus herbstii* (Atlantic Mud Crab)

Carapaces of Select Crabs of the New England Coast



Species are all native.