

STOP AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

EUROPEAN GREEN CRABS

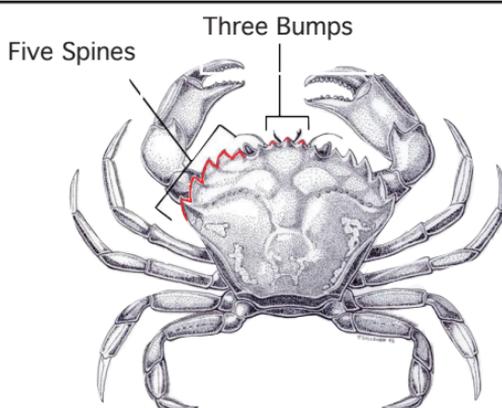


Photo by P. Sean McDonald

WHY LOOK FOR EUROPEAN GREEN CRABS?

European green crabs compete with native crab species and are voracious predators of clams, oysters, mussels, marine worms, and small crustaceans. In Alaska, green crabs could pose a serious economic and environmental threat to native crabs, including the young of commercially caught crabs, as well as to clam and oyster fisheries.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:



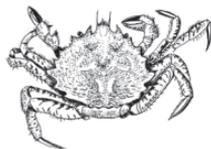
Art by Timothy Sullivan

- Five distinct spines (teeth) on each side of shell, between widest part of shell and eyes
- Top shell (carapace) usually dark brown to green, mottled with yellowish spotting
- Top shell up to 4 inches wide
- Three bumps between the eyes
- Both front claws the same size

COMMON ALASKA CRABS THAT CAN BE CONFUSED WITH EUROPEAN GREEN CRAB

HELMET OR HORSE CRAB

- Large, jagged teeth on each side of top shell
- Entire body covered with stiff, bristly hairs
- Frontal area protrudes past eyes



PYGMY ROCK CRAB

- Large claws, tips black
- Top shell nearly circular in outline, widest at 7th or 8th tooth
- Legs very hairy



DUNGENESS CRAB

- Broadly oval, uneven top shell with ten teeth, widest at the 10th and final tooth
- Narrow frontal area, with five unequal teeth between the eyes
- Light-colored leg tips



REPORTING:

You can play an important role in the early detection of non-native species. Community monitors have been widely successful against the spread of the European green crab in North America. Green crabs have successfully invaded the West coast of North America as far north as British Columbia, but have not been found in Alaska. Scientists and resource managers generally agree that green crab arrival in Alaska is no longer a matter of “if” but “when.”

- When looking at a suspicious crab, compare the appearance with the description on this card. If you think you have a green crab, do not release it! Take a picture of the crab, if you can.
- Put the crab in a container, labeled with the date and location where it was found. Describe the environment you found it in, such as rocky beach or boat hull.
- Freeze it and call 1-877-INVASIV. Email your pictures to tammy.davis@alaska.gov. Researchers will need the crab to confirm its identification.

If you are interested in learning more about citizen-based invasive species monitoring, call **907-226-4663** or **1-877-INVASIV**.

Learn more about the European Green Crab and other invasive species at **www.alaskainvasives.org**

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