

European Green Crab

Carcinus manenas



Ecological Threat

European green crabs can compete with native crab species for food including blue crabs. They are also known to eat small oysters, which could affect restoration efforts.

Method of Introduction

Unknown. Dead green crabs are legally sold as bait in Maryland's coastal bays. Live green crabs could be introduced inadvertently through the bait market.

Legal Status

It is illegal to possess, import, transport, sell, or purchase live green crab in Maryland.

Control and Prevention

Do not use live green crabs for bait. The Department recommends that unused bait be discarded and not returned to the water. Methods for removal include fully immersing them in freshwater, pulverization, or freezing. They can also be eaten. For culinary recipes, please visit:

<https://www.greencrab.org/recipes>.

Report occurrences at: [Maryland Invasive Species Tracker](#).

Want to know more? Visit: www.dnr.maryland.gov.

Key Identification Features

Has 3 bumps between the eyes and 5 spines on the shell on either side of the eyes. Grows up to 3 inches in width and is highly variable in color. Looks like mud crab.

Range

Native to coastal Europe and North Africa. Introduced to the Maryland coastal bays and the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.

Habitat

Resides in shallow, coastal or estuarine waters, often in structured habitats such as seagrass beds, rocky shores, and marshes. Tolerant of a wide range of salinities and temperatures, but survival and reproductive success decrease as salinity and temperature decrease.

Similar and Native Species of Mud Crab

Black-tipped mud crab, or Atlantic mud crab, is muddy brown with claws of unequal size with black tips.



Flatback mud crab has a noticeably flattened, oval shell with 4 spines on each side.



White-fingered mud crab has an olive-brown shell and white-tipped claws.

