

***European Green Crab* WATCH**



Photo Credit: © Gregory C. Jensen

The European Green Crab

European green crabs (*Carcinus maenas*) may pose a serious threat to the estuarine and marine ecosystems and economy of the West Coast (including B.C. and Alaska). They are voracious predators that feed on intertidal plants and animals. This predator, which prefers intertidal and shallow subtidal (<20 ft) estuarine areas, may also eat important recreational and commercial species such as oysters, mussels, clams, and juvenile Dungeness, King, or Tanner crabs. Female crabs can produce up to 500,000 eggs per year.

These global invaders, native to Europe and North Africa, now occupy Australia, Tasmania, South Africa, and both coasts of North America. They were discovered on the West Coast in California in 1989 and have since spread to Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Potential pathways for their spread include dispersal from established populations, disposal of bait and associated materials, ballast water discharge from ships, transport of aquaculture products and equipment, distribution of live seafood, and release of teaching/research specimens. Your help is vital to report new sightings and to prevent their spread.

What you can do:

- ***Learn*** how to identify European green crabs (see back cover).
- ***Dispose*** of unwanted live bait, seafood packaging, and study specimens in trash.
- ***Never*** dump live shellfish, fish, or plants from one body of water into another.
- ***Report*** new sightings – note the date and exact location; freeze specimen in a sealed plastic bag; and call a natural resource management agency nearest you:
Alaska: call the toll free Alaska Invasive Species Hotline (877) 468-2748; British Columbia: call Fisheries and Oceans Canada (250) 756-7223; Washington: call Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (360) 902-2200; Oregon: call the toll free Oregon Invasive Species Hotline (866) 468-2337.

REMINDER:

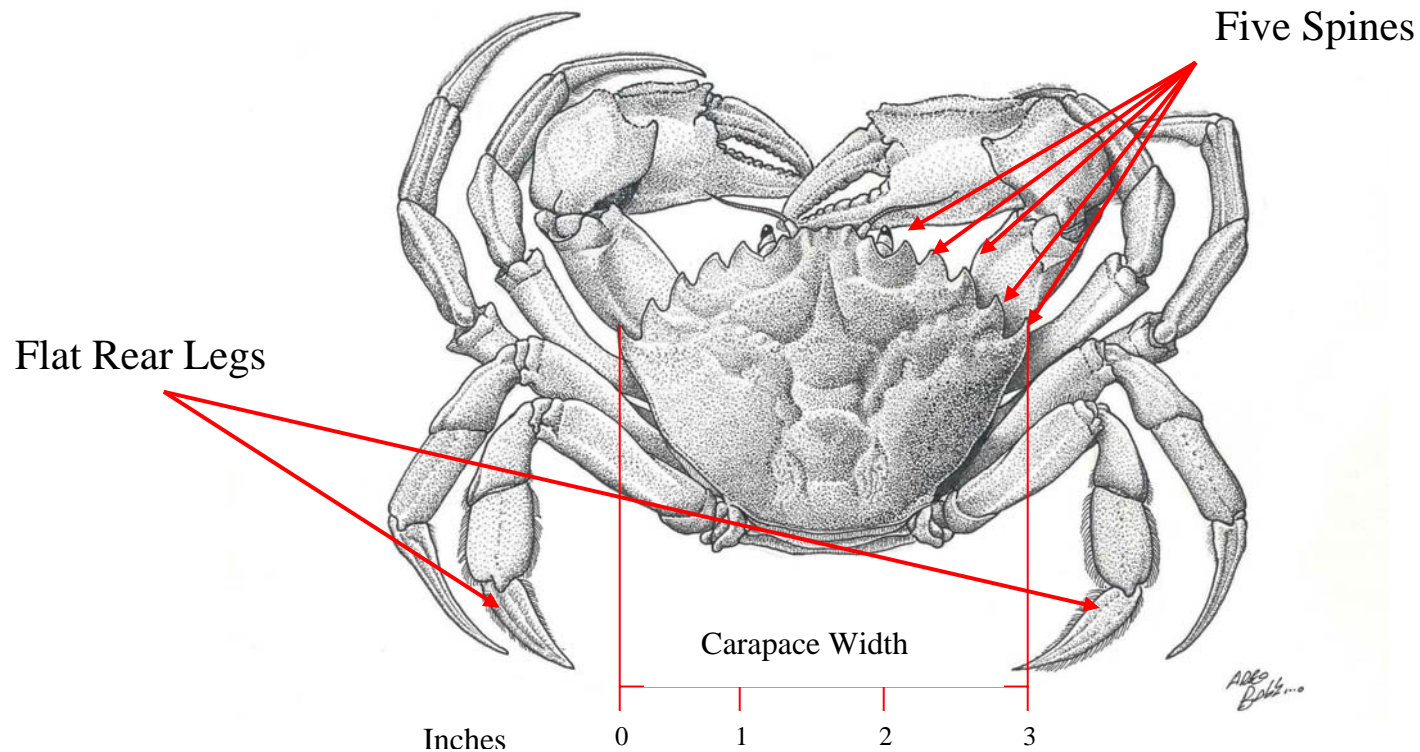
Know the rules!

Green crab specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but many jurisdictions have different rules regarding possession and transport. Contact your local natural resources management agency for instructions. Never transport a live green crab.

How to Identify a European Green Crab (*Carcinus maenas*)

General Characteristics

- Five lateral carapace spines
- Carapace up to 3.5 inches (90 mm) wide
- Three rounded lobes between eyes
- Claws equal in size; flat rear legs; little to no hair on the carapace and claws
- Color of carapace (top) is usually green, with yellowish spotting
- Color of underside can vary from green to orange to red



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Artist: Randall D. Babb

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