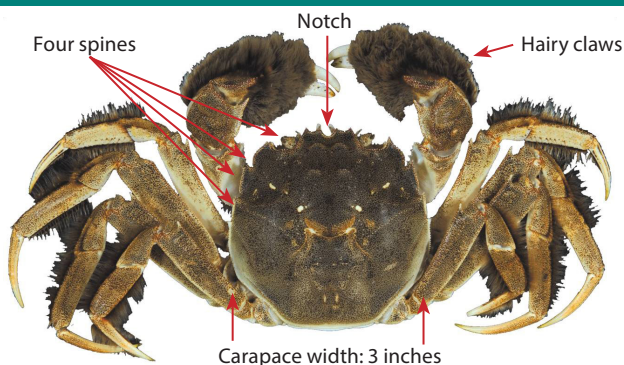


SPECIES AT A GLANCE

Chinese Mitten Crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*)

New photo credit.



The **Chinese mitten crab** (*Eriocheir sinensis*) is a burrowing crab that has a catadromous lifecycle meaning it spends the majority of its life in the freshwater reaches of coastal watersheds, and reproduces and develops in brackish and saline estuaries. This crab can significantly transform the aquatic ecosystems it invades through its intensive burrowing activities and high-density populations, which alter food webs and the physical habitat. The carapace is up to 4 inches in width and light brown in color with a notch in the middle, between the eyes. Claws have white tips and a dense patch of fur-like setae, which gave them their name.

REPORT THIS SPECIES!

Oregon: 1-866-INVADER or OregonInvasivesHotline.org
Washington: 1-877-9-INFEST or www.invasivespecies.wa.gov
California: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/report

Species in the news

"Fishing column: Beware of Chinese mitten crabs," by Martin Armstrong. www.sfgate.com/default/article/Fishing-Column-Beware-of-chinese-mitten-crabs-190826.php

Learning extensions

Mitten Crab Lab, available at MenaceToTheWest.org.

Resources

USDA species profile: www.invasive-speciesinfo.gov/aquatics/mitten-crab.shtml

Why you should care

The Chinese mitten crab threatens ecosystems, earthen structures, and fisheries by preying on and competing with many species including fish eggs, clams, and mussels; and by eroding riverbanks, wetland edges, and levees. It is an intermediate host of lung flukes from the genus *Paragonimus* (*P. ringeri*, *P. westermani*), which can infest humans and other mammals if raw or improperly cooked crab is consumed. As of now, the other intermediate host, *Assiminea parasitologica* (AP snail) is not found in the same region as Chinese mitten crab. If the two hosts were in overlapping habitats with the parasite, it could fully mature and cause a serious health concern.



Data on map represents established population and species occurrence data.
Map created 2/14 by USGS.

How they got here and spread

The Chinese mitten crab was first identified in the south San Francisco Bay in 1992 by commercial shrimp trawlers, and quickly spread to the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. It was introduced either through ship ballast water or intentionally introduced as a food source.

What you can do

Clean all bilge and bait wells, fishing nets, and other gear before moving to new water bodies. It is illegal to import eggs or live specimens of any species of mitten crab to the United States under the Federal Lacey Act. It is also illegal to import, transport, or possess live Chinese mitten crabs in California, Washington, and Oregon.

COOL FACTS

The most identifiable feature is the dense patch of setae on its white-tipped claws that look like tufts of hair. The purpose of these "furry" mittens is still unknown.

Juveniles can adeptly walk on land and migrate upstream a hundred miles or more, climbing over obstacles such as small dams or dikes.

Synonyms: Shanghai crab, river crab, mitten crab