

# Cancer irroratus

Rock Crab

Native to Maine

Coastal  
Rocky Intertidal

## Carapace (Shell)



Photo by Curt Brown, GMRI



Look for a carapace (shell) that is up to 14 cm wide and has 8 - 10 sharp spines from the eye to the side of the shell.

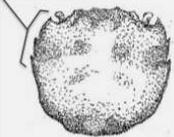
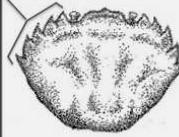
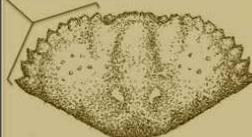
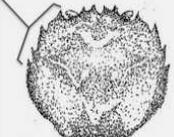
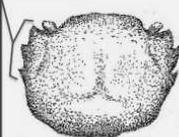
## Full View



Photo by Curt Brown, GMRI



Look for a crab with a wide, yellow to reddish-brown carapace (shell). It can be as large as your hand, but is often much smaller when found in the shallow intertidal zone.

INVASIVE SPECIES (LESS THAN SIX SPINES)		NATIVE SPECIES (MORE THAN SIX SPINES)
3 spines  Hemigrapsus sanguineus	5 spines  Carcinus maenas	8-10 spines  Cancer irroratus
4 spines  Eriocheir sinensis	3 spines  Hemigrapsus penicillatus	8-10 spines  Cancer borealis

## Legs and Claws



Photo by Curt Brown, GMRI



Look for legs that are thick and have long pointed tips. The claws are thick, but not as bulky as the Jonah Crabs. It is also much quicker and more aggressive than the Jonah Crab.

## Additional



Photo by Ken-ichi Ueda, www.flickr.com



The Rock Crab's carapace (shell) is actually yellowish, but it is covered in many tiny purple dots that can give it a reddish-brown appearance. The belly and inside of the legs are white.

[www.vitalsignsme.org](http://www.vitalsignsme.org)

## Similar Species

The Rock Crab is most easily confused with the Jonah Crab. They both have wide carapaces (shells) but the Rock Crab's carapace has a flatter surface that flares out at the sides. Its spines are pointed. The Jonah Crab has a rounded, dome-like carapace with rounded spines.

## Fun Fact

Female Rock Crabs shed their shell right before mating. After they are fertilized females lay their eggs and carry them under their belly for almost a year. They can lay up to 500,000 eggs!