

Eriocheir sinensis Chinese mitten crab

MARINE PEST GUIDE



Photos: California Dept of Fish and Game

Identifying features

- **White-tipped**, hairy front claws, normally equal in size.
- A deep **notch between the eyes**.
- 4 spines behind each eye on edges of carapace (shell).
- Rounded, smooth, brown carapace, up to 8 cm across.
- Legs generally twice as long as carapace.
- **No swimming** legs (paddles).
- Can migrate up and down rivers in large numbers.

Where are they found?

- Occurs in tidal creeks, rivers and estuaries.
- Found from intertidal to depths of 10 m or more.
- Burrows into sand, mud or clay banks.
- Young crabs occur in freshwater, migrating to salt water when adults.

www.biosecurity.govt.nz
0800 80 99 66



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- Width of shell up to 8 cm.
- Deep notch between eyes.
- Front claws white-tipped and hairy.
- Spines on front edge of carapace.
- 4 spines behind each eye.

If you think you have seen this crab

- Note the location and if possible collect a sample and freeze it in a plastic bag.
- Contact Biosecurity New Zealand on 0800 80 99 66.

What looks similar to it?

Three New Zealand native crab species occur in similar habitats. BUT these native species are all smaller, and have distinct physical differences from the Chinese mitten crab.

Helice crassa Tunnelling mud crab



NZ NATIVE

- Width of shell up to 1.5 cm.
- Shallow notch between eyes.
- Claws not white-tipped or hairy.
- No spines on front edge of carapace.
- 3 spines behind each eye.

Hemigrapsus crenulatus Hairy-handed crab



NZ NATIVE

- Width of shell up to 2.5 cm.
- No notch between eyes.
- Claws not white-tipped; fine.
- Hairs only on inner faces of males' claws.
- No spines on front edge of carapace.
- 3 spines behind each eye.

Macrophthalmus hirtipes Stalk-eyed mud crab



NZ NATIVE

- Width of shell up to 2 cm.
- Shallow notch between eyes.
- Claws not white-tipped; slightly hairy.
- No spines on front edge of carapace.
- 3 spines behind each eye.

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