

Cancer borealis

Native to Maine

Jonah Crab,
Sleepy Crab

Coastal
Rocky Intertidal

Carapace (Shell)



Vital Signs user the COBRA n



Look for an oval carapace (shell) that is up to 16 cm wide and has 8 to 10 rounded spines from the eye to the side of the shell.

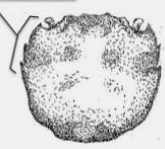
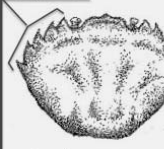

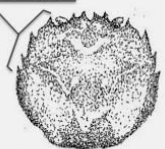
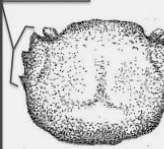

Full View



VS user pbernhardt, James F. Doughty School



Look for a crab with a wide, oval, purplish-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



Curt Brown, GMRI



Look for thick legs and thick muscular claws. Although it is strong the Jonah Crab is very slow and easy to catch. This is why it is sometimes called the Sleepy Crab.

Additional



Meredyth Eufemia, GMRI



The Jonah Crab's carapace (shell) is most often purplish-brown, but can occasionally be reddish-brown. The belly is yellowish. Purple blotches cover the tops of the legs.

Similar Species

Here are a few great ways to tell the Jonah Crab and the Rock Crab apart. They both have oval carapaces (shells) but the Jonah Crab's carapace has a more rounded, dome-like surface with jagged spines. The Rock Crab's carapace is flatter and flares out at the sides, and its spines come to a single point.

Did You Know?

The Jonah Crab is prized by fishermen for the meat in their large claws and legs. They are also a favorite food of gulls. If you find an empty shell in the intertidal it has likely been eaten by a gull.

Researched and created by Jim Dawson

Help us improve this species card! Contact us with your updates.