

# Asian Shore Crab & Brush Clawed Crab

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## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Hemigrapsus sanguineus* (Asian shore crab) & *Hemigrapsus takanoi* (brush clawed crab)

**Native to:** North West Pacific coast; China (Hong Kong) Taiwan, Korea, Russia, and Japan.

**Habitat:** *H. sanguineus*: Range of estuarine and marine habitats, within intertidal or shallow subtidal zones. *H. takanoi*: Muddy sediment in the intertidal areas of mudflats, estuaries, harbours, lagoons and sheltered bays.

Small crabs with a square carapace (shell) that has three distinct 'teeth' on each side. These teeth are more acutely pointed in *H. sanguineus* than *H. takanoi*. Both species are variable in colour from orange-brown to greenish-black. Carapace can be up to 4.5 cm across in *H. sanguineus* and up to 2.5 cm in *H. takanoi*. Both species have distinctly white claws. Females and juvenile males can be more difficult to distinguish.

*H. sanguineus* usually has dark purple, red or brown spots on the upper side of pincers, distinctive banding on the walking legs, and large males have a fleshy bulb at the pincer base. Typically found on exposed rocky shores but also in soft sediments under the shelter of rocks or shells, artificial structures, mussel beds and oyster reefs.

*H. takanoi* has tiny dark spots on carapace, legs and claws (never on the abdomen) and adult males have a small patch of yellow-brown fuzzy growth on the claws. Tend to occupy low energy, sheltered sites and are found under boulders and other hard structures.

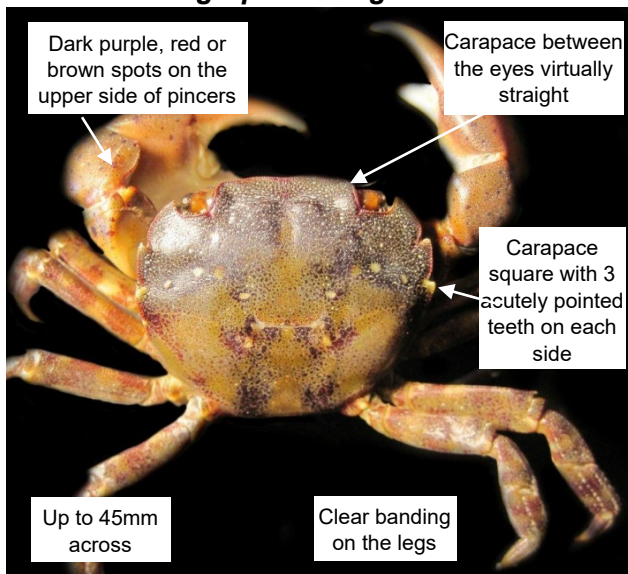
*H. sanguineus* and *H. takanoi* are not present in Northern Ireland, both species may compete with native crab species and are potential predators of shellfish.

**As both the Asian shore crab and the Bush clawed crab are not ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland, under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is an offence to release or allow either species to escape into the wild.**



## Key ID Features

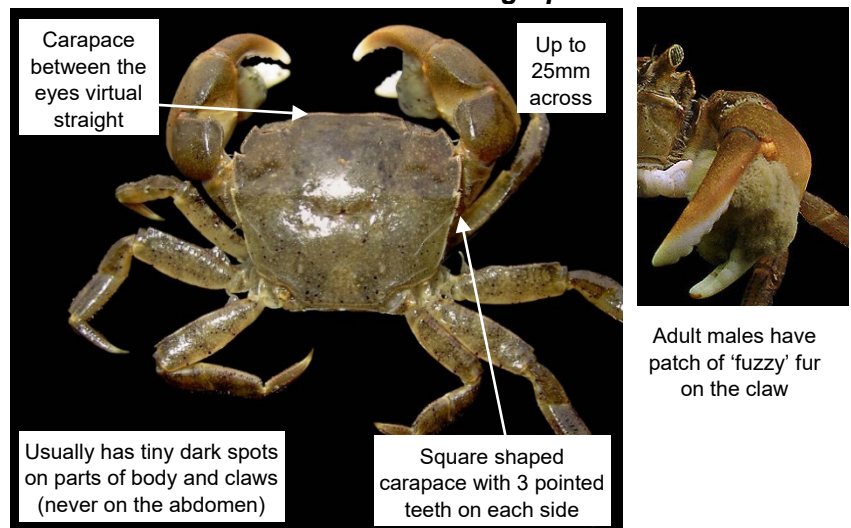
### *Hemigrapsus sanguineus*



Adult males have bulbous projection on claw



### *Hemigrapsus takanoi*



Adult males have patch of 'fuzzy' fur on the claw

### *H. sanguineus*



### *H. takanoi*



Both species have a finely striated suborbital stridulation organ (crest below each eye).

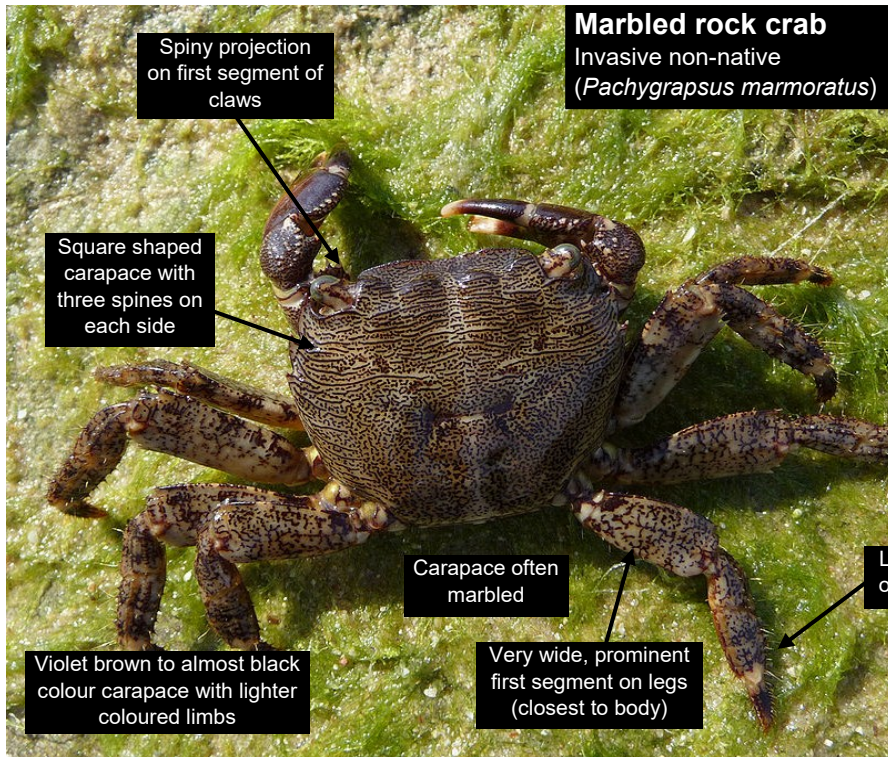
In *H. sanguineus* this is undivided, in *H. takanoi* this is divided into 3 unequal parts.

Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>



# Similar Species

Most crabs likely to be found on the shore have more than three teeth on either side of carapace and are not square shaped. An exception is *Pachygrapsus marmoratus* (another non-native invasive species), which can be differentiated from both species by its marbled colouration and spiny projection on the first segment of the claw.



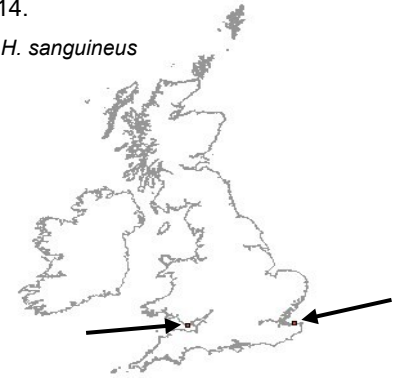
**Marbled rock crab**  
Invasive non-native  
(*Pachygrapsus marmoratus*)

# Distribution

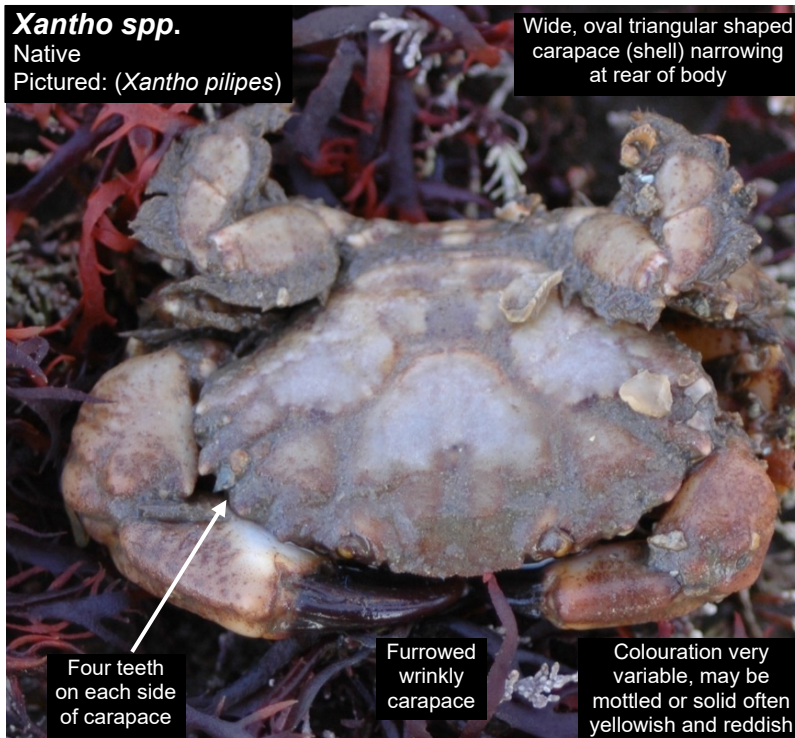
Several specimens of *H. sanguineus* have been reported from Jersey and Guernsey since 2009 and specimens were reported from Glamorgan, Wales and Kent, England in May 2014. A specimen of *H. takanoi* was recorded on the Medway Estuary in August 2014.

*H. sanguineus*

Source: NBN gateway. Check website for current distribution



Legs have spines on final segments



**Xantho spp.**

Native  
Pictured: (*Xantho pilipes*)

Wide, oval triangular shaped carapace (shell) narrowing at rear of body

**Shore crab**

Native  
(*Carcinus maenas*)

Five teeth on each side of carapace

Three bumps between eyes

Carapace wider at eye end (more triangular than square)

Legs not showing clear banding

## References and further reading:

Charles E. Epifanio, Invasion biology of the Asian shore crab *Hemigrapsus sanguineus*: A review, *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*, Volume 441, March 2013, Pages 33- 49

Photos from: Martin Burke, Joey, Butler, Jack Sewell and Wikicommons Duquesne.

*Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

Adapted for Northern Ireland Environment Agency 2020