



Chinese Mitten Crab

Eriocheir sinensis

History

- * Between 2005-2008, 19 individuals were confirmed along the U.S. Atlantic coast in the Chesapeake Bay (2005-2007), Delaware Bay (2007), Hudson River (2007-2008), and Raritan Bay and Toms River, New Jersey (2008)
- * In Quebec, specimens have been collected from St. Lawrence River at Notre-Dame-de-Pierreville in 2004 and Quebec City in 2005
- * Both females and males have been found, but an established reproductive population in eastern U.S. has not been confirmed as of the summer of 2008

Characteristics

- * Light brown to olive green
- * Carapace (shell) up to 4 in (10 cm) wide
- * 4 lateral spines on each side of carapace
- * Notch between the eyes
- * Claws hairy with white tips
- * Claws normally equal in size
- * Legs longer than twice the carapace width

Habitat

- * Estuaries, lakes, riparian zones, water courses, wetlands
- * Burrows in the bottom and banks of freshwater rivers and estuaries
- * Tolerates wide range of temperatures
- * Catadromous life cycle: begins as estuarine larva, migrates into freshwater streams for 1-4 years, then returns to coast to reproduce
- * Able to survive in highly polluted aquatic habitats
- * Adept at walking on land and around barriers

Known Distribution

- * Native to east Asia
- * Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay, Hudson River, New Jersey, Quebec

Impacts

- * Efficient predator and competitor for food; may have a profound effect on native biological communities
- * Damage to fishing gear
- * Clogged pumps, screens, and intake pipes
- * Burrowing activity may accelerate erosion of banks and levees



Mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*)

Credit: Christian Fischer

