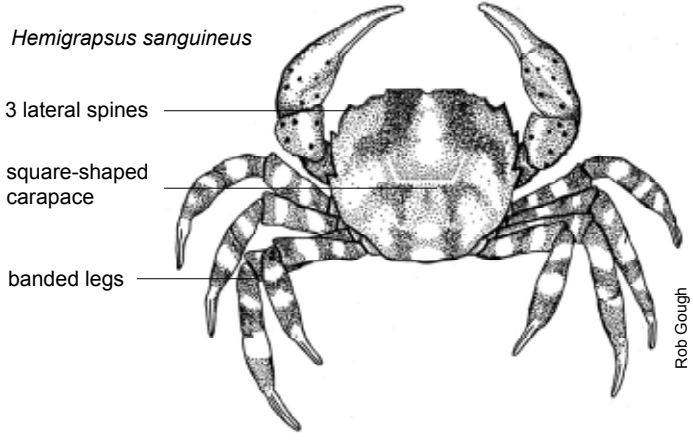
GUIDE TO MARINE INVADERS
IN THE GULF OF MAINE

Hemigrapsus sanguineus
Asian shore crab

Salem Sound Coastwatch

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- 3 lateral spines on each side of a square-shaped carapace (shell)
- Light and dark bands on legs with red spots on the claws
- Color variable: commonly orange-brown, also green and maroon
- Carapace width up to 2 in (5 cm)
- Larger males have fleshy bulb at base of pincers



HABITAT PREFERENCE

- Occurs primarily in mid to low intertidal zones and sometimes the subtidal zone
- Tends to aggregate in high densities under rocks
- Tolerant of a wide range of salinity and temperature
- Prefers rocks and cobble but may be found in soft sediments and other habitats

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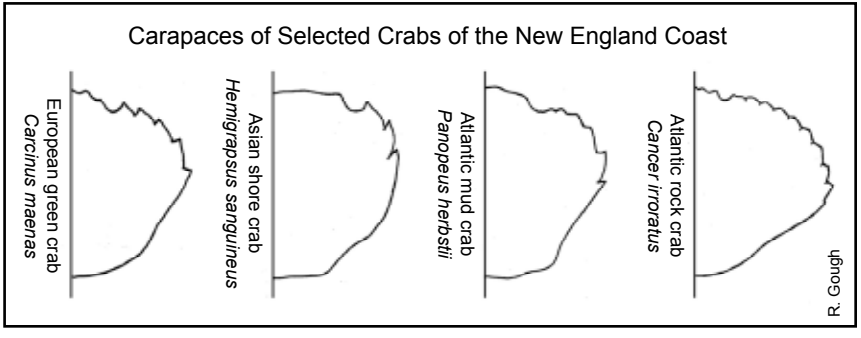
INVASION STATUS & ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Abundant in rocky intertidal habitats, *Hemigrapsus sanguineus* is a native of the western Pacific Ocean ranging from Russia, the Korean and Chinese coasts to Hong Kong, and Japan. It was first recorded in the United States in 1988 at Townsends Inlet, Cape May County, New Jersey. It is now well established and rapidly expanding its range along the Atlantic coast from Maine to North Carolina. Female *H. sanguineus* produce up to 50,000 eggs three to four times from May to September, compared to native crabs that reproduce twice a season. The larvae are free-floating for nearly a month before becoming juvenile crabs, increasing the possibility of being transported to new areas. An opportunistic omnivore, it feeds on salt marsh grass, algae, invertebrates, and larval and juvenile fishes.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Hemigrapsus sanguineus may be mistaken for several other crabs in New England, including the European green crab (*Carcinus maenas*), the Atlantic mud crab (*Panopeus herbstii*) and others. To differentiate the region's crabs, it is helpful to take careful note of the carapace (shell), particularly its shape and the number of marginal spines on each side (see figure on right).



This identification card is one of a series produced by Salem Sound Coastwatch (www.salemsound.org) highlighting introduced species that pose a threat to the marine environments of Massachusetts and the Gulf of Maine. The original development of these cards was funded by the MA EOEEA Office of Coastal Zone Management with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For additional species information or to report sightings, please visit www.mass.gov/czm/invasives/monitor/reporting.htm.

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