



Mitten Crab Network Newsletter (December 2007)

Citizen Network Finds Second Chinese Mitten Crab in Hudson River

On 29 October 2007, a Chinese Mitten Crab was found in the Hudson River, New York. The crab was discovered by a local waterman, who reported that it was washed up on the shore at Cold Spring Boat Club, Cold Spring, NY. The crab, a female measuring 30.5 mm in carapace width, was dead when initially found but was in otherwise good condition, suggesting it had only recently died. The specimen was delivered initially to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and then sent to the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center.

This is the second Mitten Crab confirmed in the Hudson River and was found about 30 miles north of Nyack, where the first crab mitten crab (a large male) was discovered in June 2007.

In total, eleven Mitten Crabs have now been confirmed in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, occurring from Chesapeake Bay to the Hudson River. All of these crabs were found in the past three years, 2005-2007. For Chesapeake Bay, one Mitten Crab was caught in each 2005 and 2006, and two crabs were caught in 2007. All other Mitten Crabs were caught in 2007, including four from Delaware Bay and two from the Hudson River. With the most recent Mitten Crab from the Hudson River, one female has now been found in each of the three areas.

Additional Mitten Crabs were reportedly captured in Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bay. Although these appear to be credible reports, we cannot confirm them, because specimens or photographs were not taken.

We do not yet know whether the Mitten Crabs have established a self-sustaining population in the Mid Atlantic region.

To understand the current distribution and abundance of this crab, we have established a citizen-based network for detecting and reporting Mitten Crabs along the eastern United States. The network is distributed across eastern states and involves citizens, watermen, resource managers, state and federal agencies, and research organizations. The network seeks to document occurrences of the Mitten Crab, providing an organized system for reporting and a source for current information.

Please be on alert for Mitten Crabs in bays and estuaries of the Atlantic coast. To date, people have found crabs in crab pots and washed up on the shore. Identifying photos and materials can be found on the following website: www.serc.si.edu/labs/marine_invasions/.

For anyone finding a Mitten Crab, please:

- note the location and date of capture;
- take a photograph and/or retain the crab; and
- contact the Mitten Crab hotline at SERCMittenCrab@si.edu or 443-482-2222.