

Chinese Mitten Crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*)

A Decapod Crustacean (10 legs)

Size: Carapace (shell) up to 85mm wide

Omnivore – Opportunistic and indiscriminate, they can feed on a wide variety of aquatic plants, algae, invertebrates, fish, fish eggs and detritus.

Breathes by taking water in through openings at base of legs which connect with gill chambers under carapace (shell). Spent water is released close to the mouth and small appendages are waved around to maintain the flow.



Introduced to the UK in ship ballast water. First found in the Thames in 1935. Only UK species to tolerate freshwater but must return to saltwater to breed. Has few natural predators and feeds on/outcompetes a range of native species. Burrows into mudbanks causing them to collapse where not protected. Has now been placed on list of the world's worst 100 invasive alien species.