

Common name Broad-Clawed Porcelain Crab

Scientific name *Porcellana platycheles*



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- A tiny hairy crab, more closely related to squat lobsters.
- The carapace is up to 15mm wide.
- Greyish brown on top and dirty yellow underneath.
- They have large flattened claws, 3 pairs of walking legs, another pair of smaller legs held against the carapace and two long antennae. The claws are used for defending territories.
- Found under large stones and boulders in the low intertidal shore, and shallow sublittoral.
- A filter feeder – plankton and detritus are filtered from the water using special fan-like hairs (setae) on their mouthparts.
- Probably larger crabs are the main predators.
- Two distinct sexes. The female carries up to 600 eggs in Spring between its abdomen and body.
- Abundant on all coasts from North Norway to the Mediterranean.
- Also known as the hairy porcelain crab and shaggy-flat crab.
- Quite fragile animals which can shed limbs to escape predators, hence the name. The affected limb grows back over the next few moults.



Common names

Broad-Clawed Porcelain Crab

Scientific name

Porcellana platycheles

Description

A flattened crab like animal with a hairy, rounded carapace up to 15mm wide. It has large flattened claws and 3 pairs of walking legs apparent and 2 long antennae. It is greyish brown on top and dirty yellow underneath.

Habitat and shelter

Found under large stones and boulders in the lower intertidal shore, and shallow sublittoral. The flattened shape allows it to hide in rock crevices.

Feeding

Filter feeders. Plankton and detritus is sieved from the water column using fan like setae which are parts of their mouthpieces.

Reproduction

The two sexes are distinct and the female carries up to 600 eggs in Spring and early Summer between its abdomen and its body. The precopulatory ritual involves both tactile and olfactory clues.

Additional information

Although termed crabs, they are more closely related to Squat Lobsters. They apparently only have 3 pairs of walking legs, the fourth pair being reduced in size and held against the carapace. They are abundant on all British coasts to North Norway and down to the Mediterranean.

Fun facts

Also known as the Hairy Porcelain crab and Shaggy-Flat crab. They are quite fragile animals and will often shed their limbs to escape predators, hence their name. The affected limb will grow back over the next few moults.

References

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