



Marine Invasive Non-Native Species

Information Note – Atlantic Blue Crab (*Callinectes sapidus*)



isalukis (iNaturalist)



jeremy Thorpe (iNaturalist)

Recent records

The Atlantic Blue Crab is native to the western Atlantic Ocean. It was introduced to Europe in the early 1900s and is now invasive in the Mediterranean. Other sightings have been made in France, Portugal, Spain and the North Sea.

It is not established in GB because our waters are unlikely to be suitable for its survival. However, there have been a handful of sightings dating back to 1979 and recently, in July 2024, a dead specimen was found by a member of the public near Brighton marina. A further live specimen was caught in October 2024 near Brighton Pier on a fishing vessel.

It is sold live in the UK so these recent records could be due to accidental/deliberate releases. Other likely pathways of introduction are through transport in ballast water as well as natural dispersal (females can travel several hundred kilometres).

What is the issue?

Invasive non-native species can pose major threats to native biodiversity, economy, human health and ecosystem services. *C. sapidus* is a voracious predator of clams, mussels and oysters. It opens shellfish with its claws, by chipping the edge of a valve, or forcing the valves apart. Predation rates can be high on unprotected shellfish beds.

This species is unlikely to be a threat to GB in our current climate, but it has the potential to establish in the future.

We need your help!

We are keen to better understand current numbers and improve recording of this species.

Please be vigilant - retain any specimens caught and hand them in to your local MMO office

For sightings please send reports, ideally with photos, through the iRecord reporting platform: [iRecord](#).

Biosecurity: Promote and practice best practice biosecurity to prevent this and other INNS from being introduced and spread <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/biosecurity/marine-biosecurity/>

For more information: <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/full/10.1079/cabicompdiendum.90126>

Contact: shoreham@marinemanagement.org.uk 0208 026 9057 or hastings@marinemanagement.org.uk 0208 026 9180