

BLUE CRAB HEALTH FIELD IDENTIFICATION

Call the Fish Kill Hotline (**1-800-636-0511**) if you see blue crabs with any of these abnormal physical characteristics, and/or acting extremely lethargic. The crabs should be removed from the water and disposed of on land to stop the spread of the parasite or bacteria.

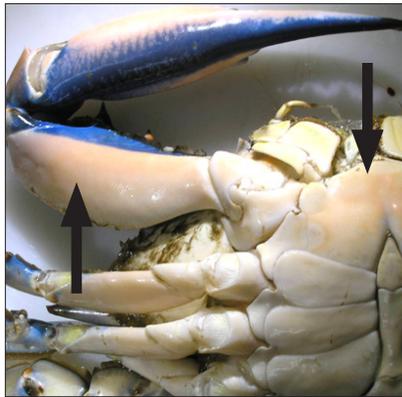
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SHELL



Healthy

Underside of crab is white to yellowish with no corrosion.



Bitter Crab

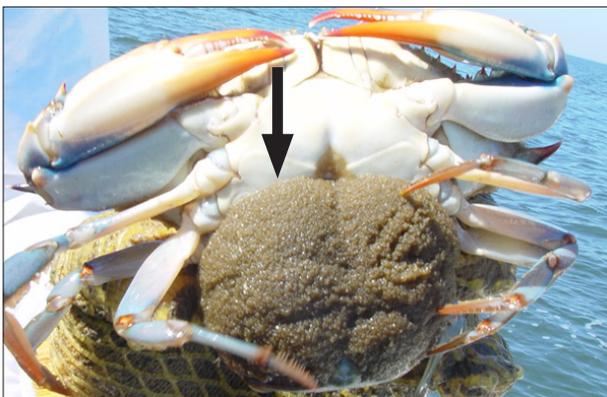
Parasite can be detected by the light pink coloration on shell.



Shell Disease

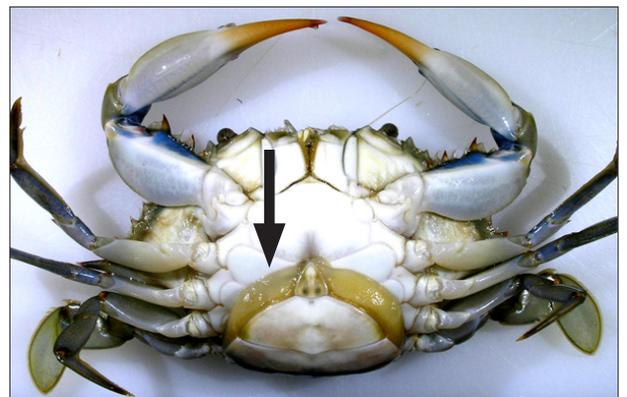
Bacterial infection that damages the shell.

REPRODUCTION



Healthy

Egg mass can be brown, tan or orange depending on developmental stage.



Barnacle Parasite

Often mistaken for egg mass, but is slick with no individual eggs.



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County
Environmental
Fund

Funding for this study was made available through a grant from the Pinellas County Environmental Fund, a partnership between the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

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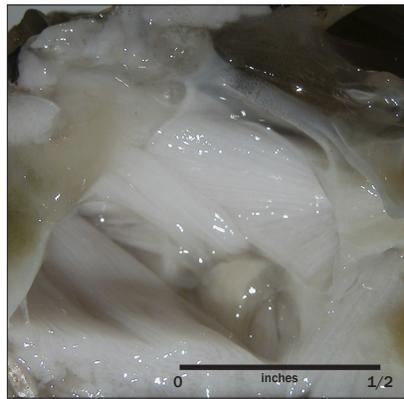
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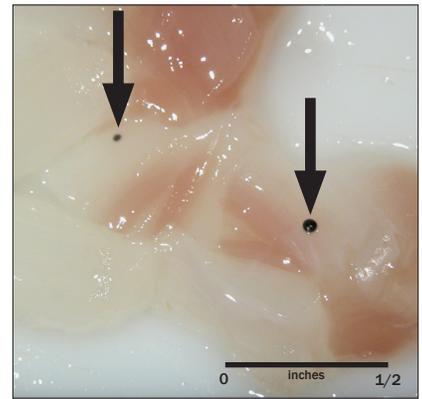
MUSCLE



Healthy
Muscle is translucent and free of discoloration.

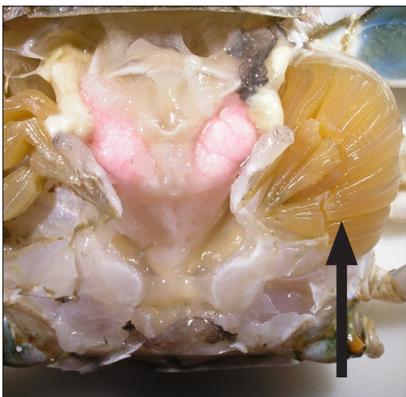


Cotton Crab
Parasite makes the crab muscle opaque white.

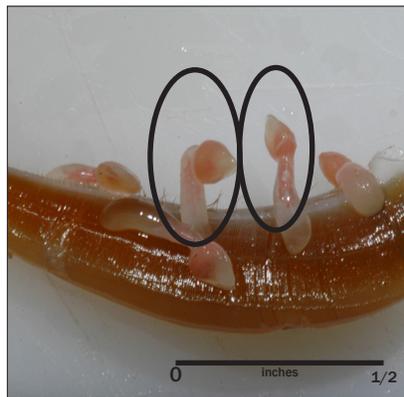


Pepper Spot
Parasitic protozoan affects the aesthetics of the meat.

GILLS



Healthy
Gills are light colored and clear.



Gill Barnacles
Parasite attaches to the gills and if abundant can harm crab.



Cysts
Early stages of parasitic worms form cysts in the gills.



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