

# CHRISTMAS ISLAND RED CRAB



## Conservation Status:

not listed as threatened or endangered

## Scientific Classification

Class: Malacostraca

Order: Decapoda

Family: **Gecarcinidae**

Genus: *Gecarcoidea*

Species: *natalis*



## FAST FACTS

**Length:** 5 inches

**Weight:** 17 ounces

**Life Span:** over 12 years

**Number of young:** a female may brood up to 100,000 eggs

**Range:** Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean

**Diet:** Scavenger, eats fallen leaves and flowers and occasionally animals

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Red Crabs are known for their famous annual mass migration to the sea in order to lay their eggs. They migrate by the millions and can be seen from the air!
- Outside of the breeding season, red crabs are solitary and live in a humid burrow for most of the year.
- The eggs released by the female hatch immediately upon contact with the water.

## Ecology & Conservation

It is possible that the extremely large population of the Christmas Island Red Crabs may have been caused by the extinction of Maclear's Rat. This rat was thought to have been a possible predator of the crab, keeping their populations in check.

Humans also affect the red crab population. Thousands of crabs are crushed each year while crossing roads. In order to reduce the number of crabs killed by cars each year, crab crossings are being constructed. A crab crossing consists of a tunnel dug under the road in areas of dense migrations for the crabs to pass through.