

Sand Crab

Photo by Paul Blieden



Description: Sand crabs live most of their lives buried in the sand. Their egg-shaped shells are perfectly camouflaged to blend in with the sandy bottom. To eat, sand crabs burrow their bodies backwards in the sand so only their eyes and antennae are showing. This method protects them from predators. They then grab

plankton with another pair of antennae. Sand crabs have paddles instead of pinchers and can only move backwards.

Where they are Found: Sand crabs are found in the areas of breaking waves, from Alaska to Baja, California.

Diet: Sand crabs eat plankton and are eaten by shorebirds and fishes.

Status in the ocean: Sand crabs reside in the sand, the area most often contaminated with a high amount of toxins. Sand crabs can ingest domoic acid from algae, which in high concentrations, can cause brain damage in many marine mammals large fishes, and even humans. The amount of toxin in sand crabs can determine how much domoic acid is in the area.

WOW!!! A female sand crab can produce 45,000 eggs at a time! These bright orange eggs are carried in her abdomen for 30 days until they hatch. Sand crabs can live for 2-3 years.