



Photo Courtesy of Marine Science Center

Gulf Calico crab

Hepatus epheliticus

Range: The Gulf Calico Crab can be found in warm tropical waters. It often burrows in sandy areas in shallow waters. The Calico Crab can range from the Chesapeake Bay to the West Indies, but they are most abundant in the Gulf.

Similar Species: A similar species that can be confused with the Gulf Calico Crab is the Spotted Porcelain Crab, *Porcellana sayana*, which has spots like the Gulf Calico Crab. The difference between the two species is that the porcelain crab has white spots while the Calico Crab has red dots. The Porcelain Crab grows to only half the size of a Gulf Calico Crab.

Identification: The Gulf Calico Gulf crab can grow to 6cm (2 1/3in) long. The margins on the carapace are finely toothed. The color of the crab ranges from gray to brownish, with large spots scattered on the carapace that are red in the middle and dark around the border.

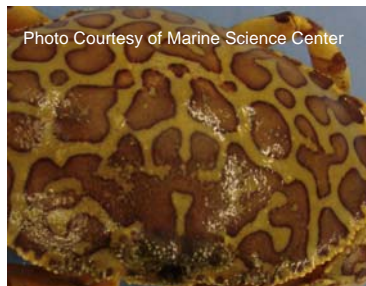


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Close up of the spots found on a Gulf Calico Crab

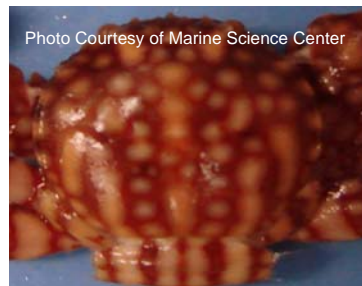


Photo Courtesy of Marine Science Center

Close up of the spots found on a Porcelain Crab

Note: Gulf Calico Crabs are walking crabs, meaning that their back legs are designed for walking rather than being flattened and used for swimming and digging. Gulf Calico Crabs are usually scavengers rather than hunters. Another interesting note is that the Gulf Calico Crab usually has a Tri-colored Anemone, *Calliactis tricolor* on its back, that come off when the crab molts.