



James Merryweather

**A Field Guide to the Crabs
and Crab-like Crustaceans
Found on Highland Shores**



KEY TO CRABS AND CRAB-LIKE CRUSTACEANS

PLATE

1a Living inside a 'snail' shell. Abdomen soft.	Hermit Crabs	1
1b Not living in a 'snail' shell. Abdomen hard.	Go to 2	
2a Abdomen large, extendable with tail (almost 'lobster-like').	Squat Lobsters	2
2b Abdomen small, flat and lacking obvious tail, tucked under extensive carapace ('crab-like').	Go to 3	
3a Carapace* pear-shaped, narrowest at head, which is very narrow.	Go to 4 (check: 7a)	
3b Carapace oval, circular or oblong/rhombus-shaped, but not pear-shaped. Head broad, incorporated in front margin of carapace.	Go to 6	
4a Body slender. Hairless. Legs very long. (Often seaweed adorned.)	Long-legged Spider Crab	3
4b Body stout. Hairy. Legs short.	Go to 5	
5a Pair of parallel 'horns' in front of eyes.	Strawberry Crab	3
5b Lacking 'horns'.	Great Spider Crab	3
6a Carapace outline round, more-or-less circular or if oval, longer front to back than wide.	Go to 7	
6b Carapace outline roughly rhombus-shaped (curved across 'face') or if considered oval (e.g. edible crab), shorter front to back than wide.	Go to 10	
7a Carapace oval (long axis front to back up to 4 cm). Lives buried in sand with all but eyes and antennae exposed.	Masked Crab	4
7b Carapace circular or nearly so. Does not live buried in sand. Small 0.5-2 cm.	Go to 8	
8a Lives inside live mussels (found when eating cooked mussels!).	Pea Crab	4
8b Lives under boulders, never inside live mussels.	Go to 9	
9a Carapace warty. 'Pincers' flattened, very hairy.	Broad-clawed Porcelain Crab	5
9b Carapace smooth. 'Pincers' not flattened, hairless.	Long-clawed Porcelain Crab	5
10a Carapace margin 'crimped' like a pie-crust. Pincers dark.	Edible Crab	6
10b Carapace margin with 4-5 pointed teeth left and right of eyes.	Go to 11	
11a Carapace 1 – 1.5 cm across. Legs and carapace hairy all over.	Hairy Crab	7
11b Carapace of adults greater than 1.5 cm. If hairy, only on legs.	Go to 12	
12a 'Pincers' darker than other pincer leg segments, often almost black.	Go to 13	
12b 'Pincers' not especially darker than other pincer leg segments.	Go to 14	
13a Carapace teeth obtuse. Upper segment of walking legs hairy.	Montagu's Crab	7
13b Carapace teeth acute. Walking legs entirely hairy.	Risso's Crab	7
14a Terminal section of rear leg not broadly flattened.	Shore Crab	6
14b Terminal section of rear leg flattened to form a swimming paddle.	Go to 15	
15a Almost black with red eyes (and joints). Carapace furry.	Velvet Swimming Crab	8
15b Other colours, not black. Eyes not red. Carapace not furry.	Go to 16	
16a Plain brown carapace sculpted, with two arcs of small white dots, but not corrugated or colour-patterned. Paddle of rear leg deep violet.	Harbour (Swimming) Crab	8
16b Carapace corrugated or colour-patterned. Paddle not deep violet.	Go to 17	
17c Carapace corrugated, uniform brown.	Wrinkled Swimming Crab	9
17b Carapace not corrugated, variously colour-patterned.	Marbled Swimming Crab	9

* Carapace: main part of shell (shell of the cephalothorax)

Also be prepared to find: *Pagurus prideauxi*, *Galathea intermedia*, *G. squamifera*, *Inachus phalangium*, *Atelecyclus rotundatus* and *Liocarcinus pusillus*.



Unknown hermit crab
in flat periwinkle shell



Pagarus bernhardus
in a common periwinkle shell.
Often found in huge congregations.



Cloak hydrozoan
Hydractinia echinata

Pagarus bernhardus
in whelk shell,
considering moving home

PLATE 1

HERMIT CRABS



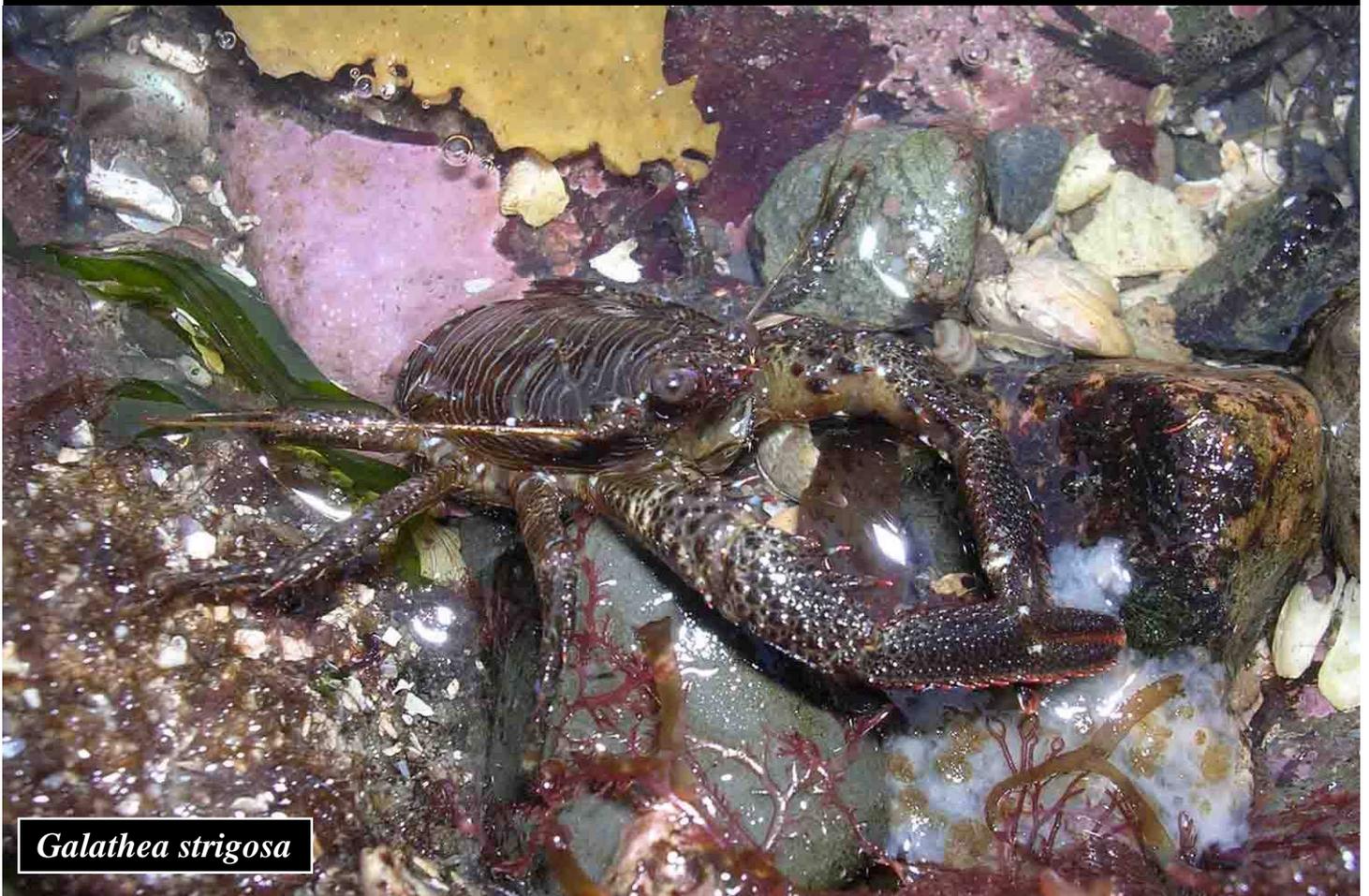
Pagarus bernhardus
in turban topshell



Galathea strigosa
(up to 9 cm long)

PLATE 2

SQUAT 'LOBSTERS'
often found under boulders



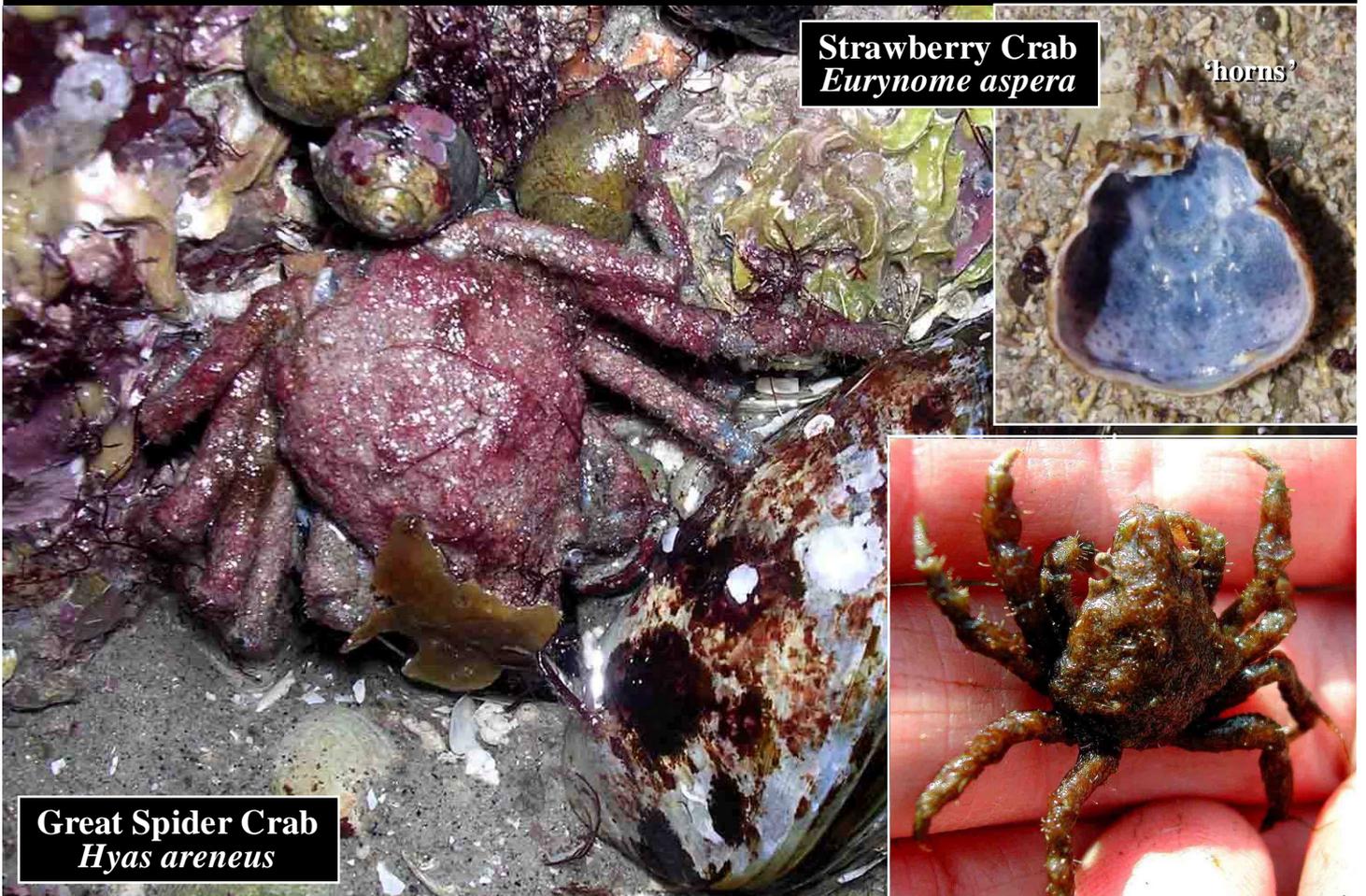
Galathea strigosa



Long-legged Spider Crab
Macropodia rostrata

PLATE 3

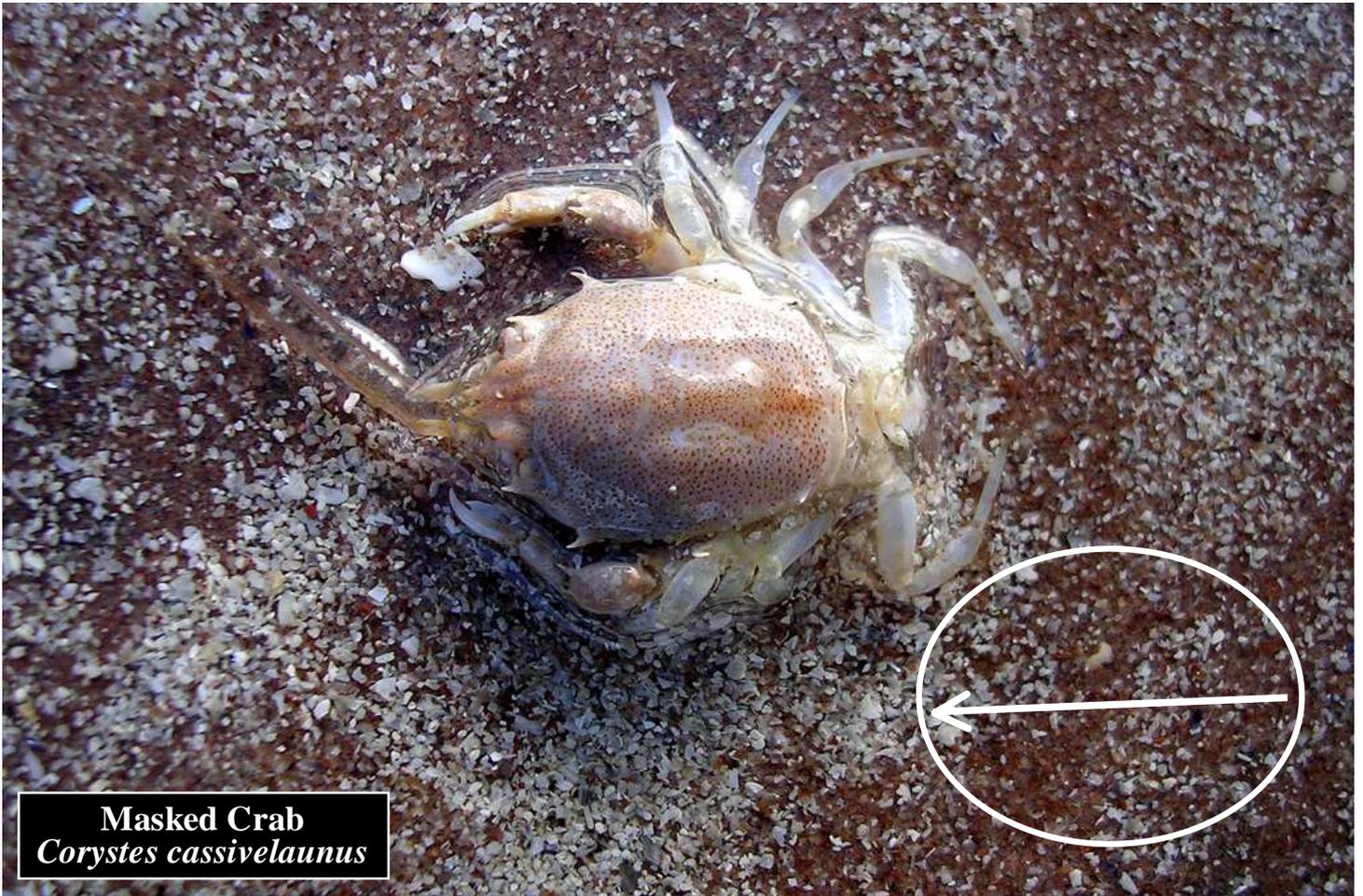
SPIDER CRABS



Strawberry Crab
Eurynome aspera

'horns'

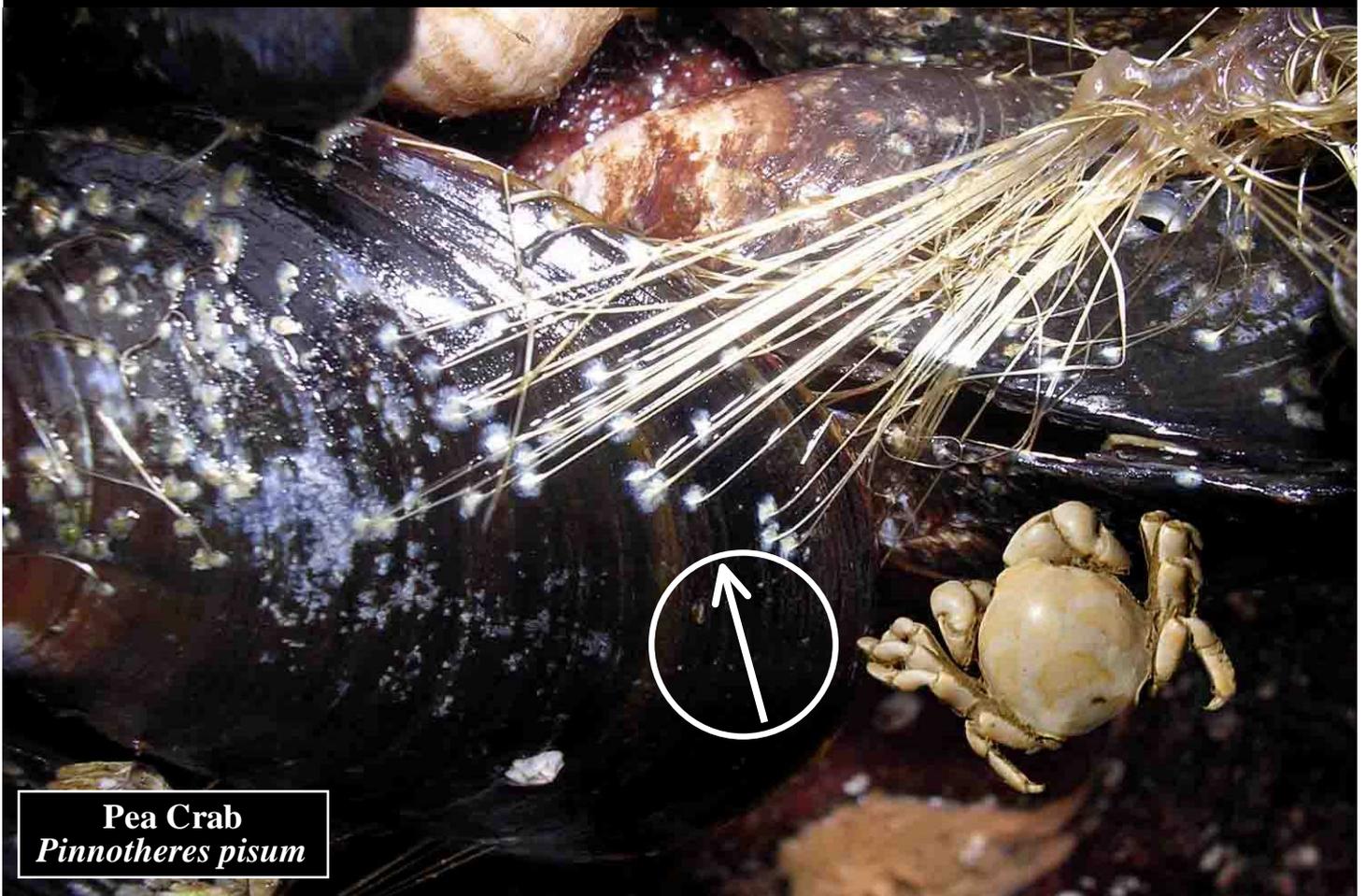
Great Spider Crab
Hyas areneus



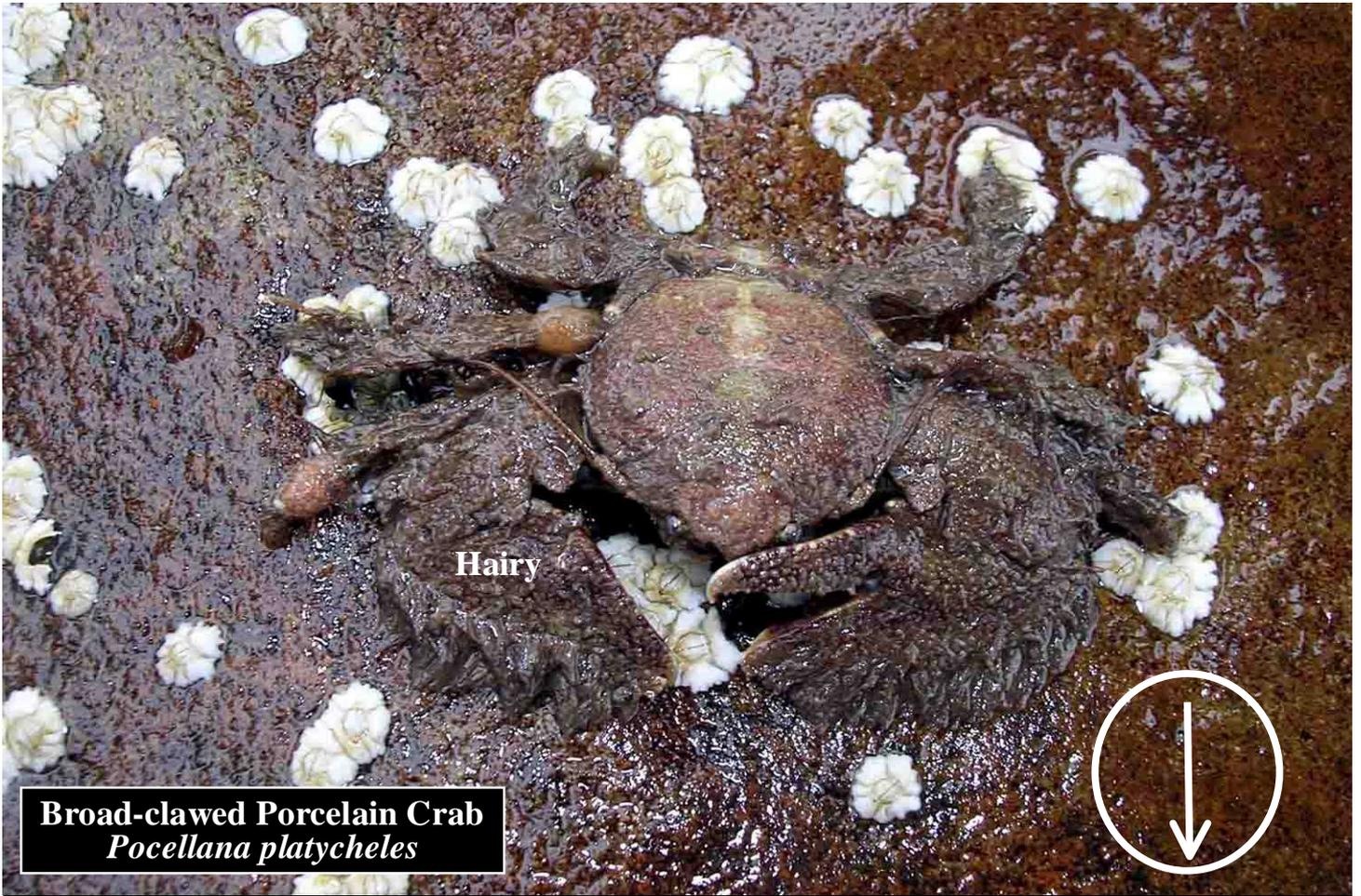
Masked Crab
Corystes cassivelaunus

PLATE 4

TWO SINGULAR CRABS



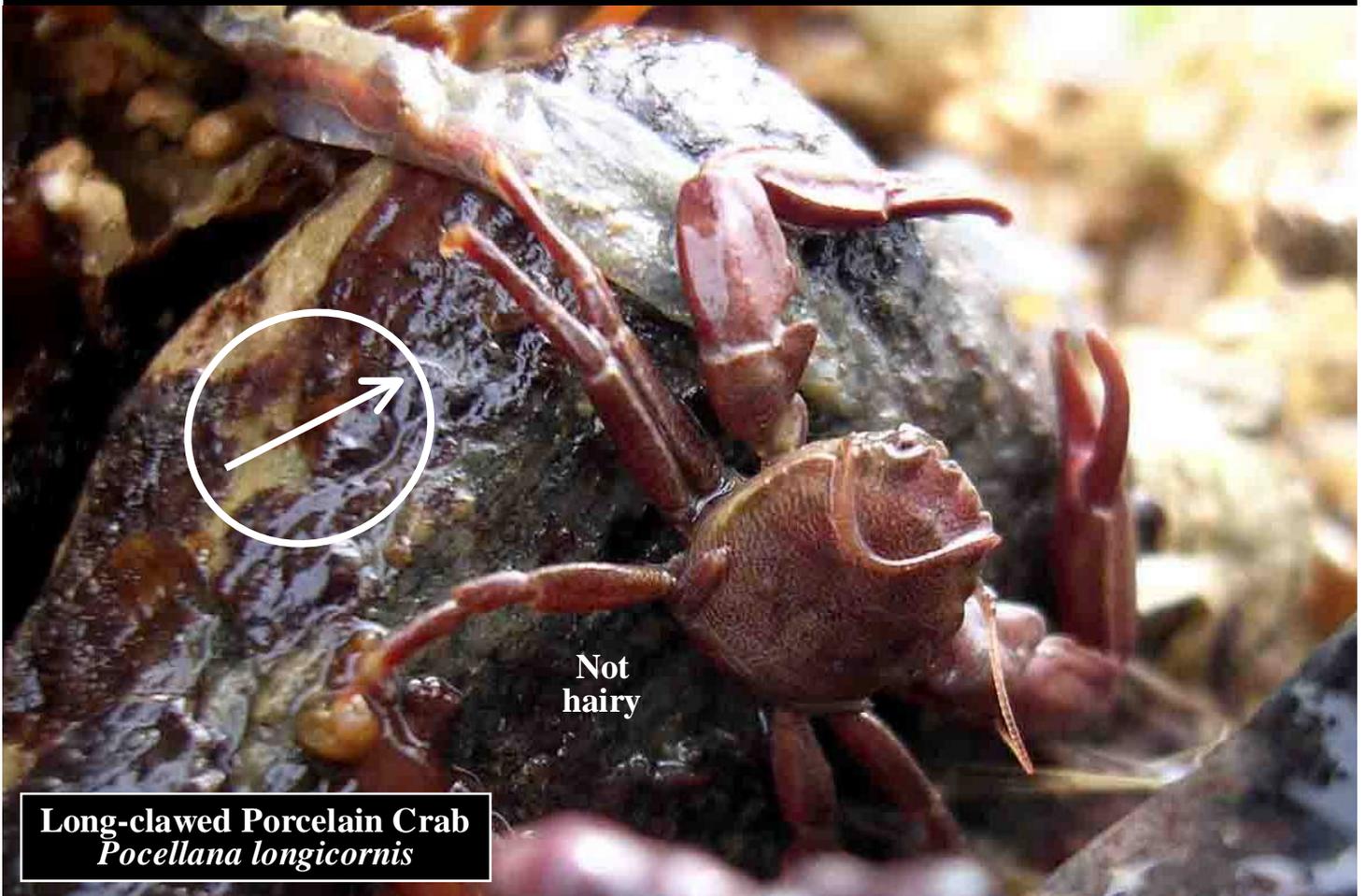
Pea Crab
Pinnotheres pisum



Broad-clawed Porcelain Crab
Pocellana platycheles

PLATE 5

PORCELAIN 'CRABS'
technically, not real crabs



Long-clawed Porcelain Crab
Pocellana longicornis

Edible Crab
Cancer pagurus

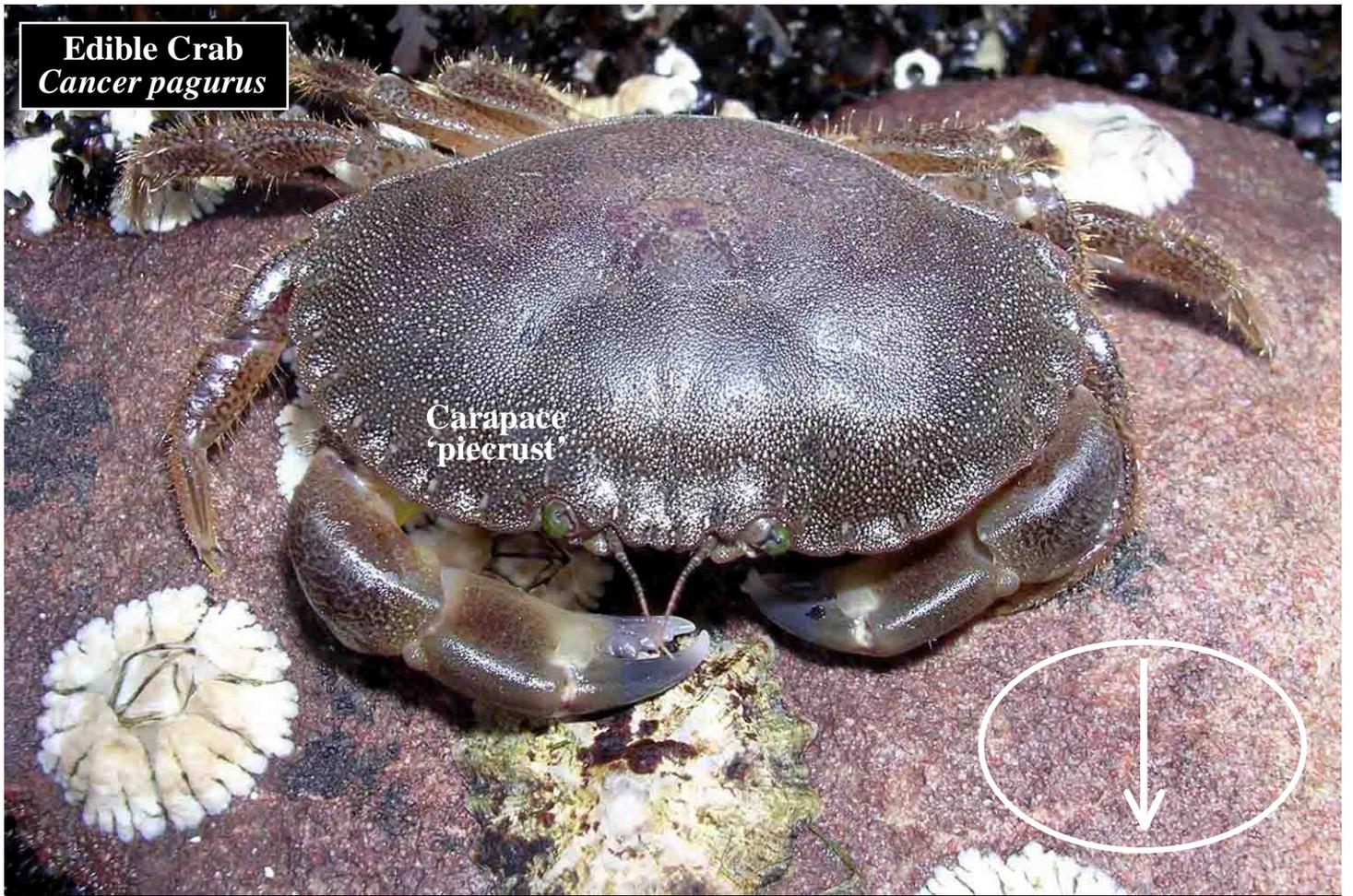


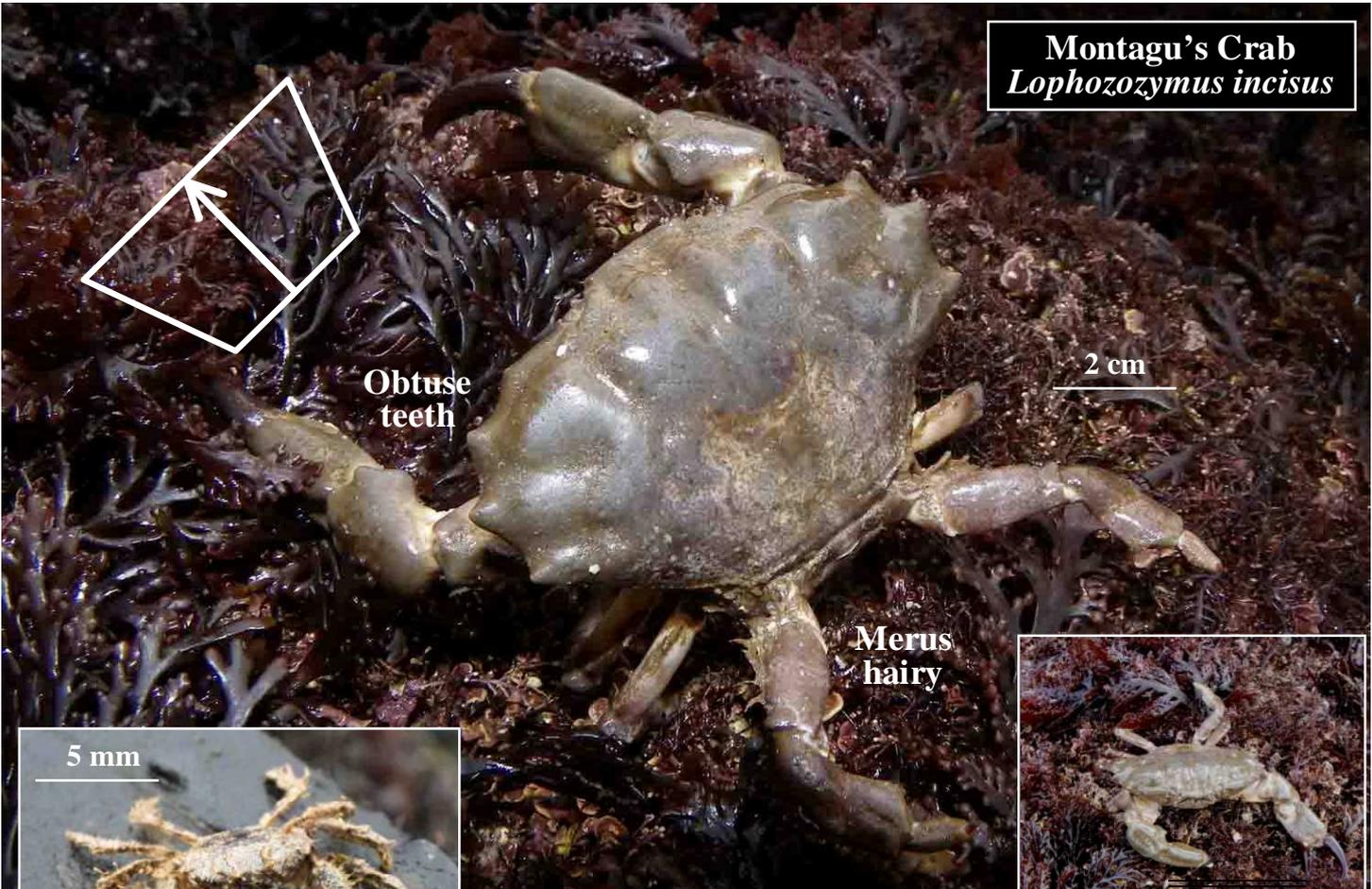
PLATE 6

OUR TWO COMMONEST CRABS



Shore Crab
Carcinus maenas

Montagu's Crab
Lophozozymus incisus



Obtuse
teeth

2 cm

Merus
hairy

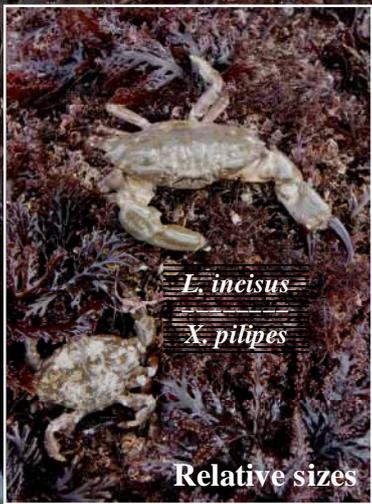
5 mm



Hairy Crab
Pilumnus hirtellus

PLATE 7

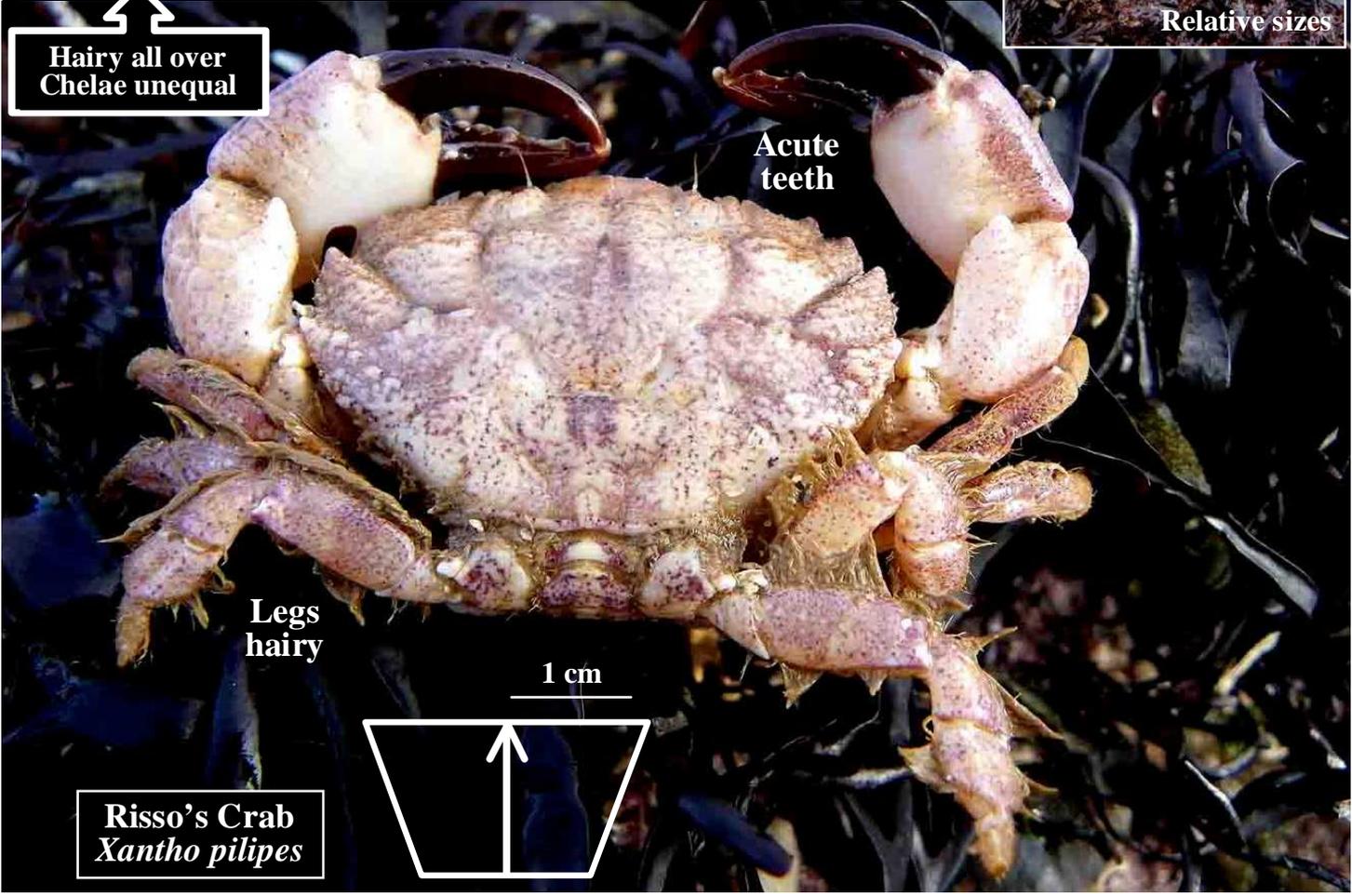
XANTHID CRABS



L. incisus
X. pilipes

Relative sizes

Hairy all over
Chelae unequal

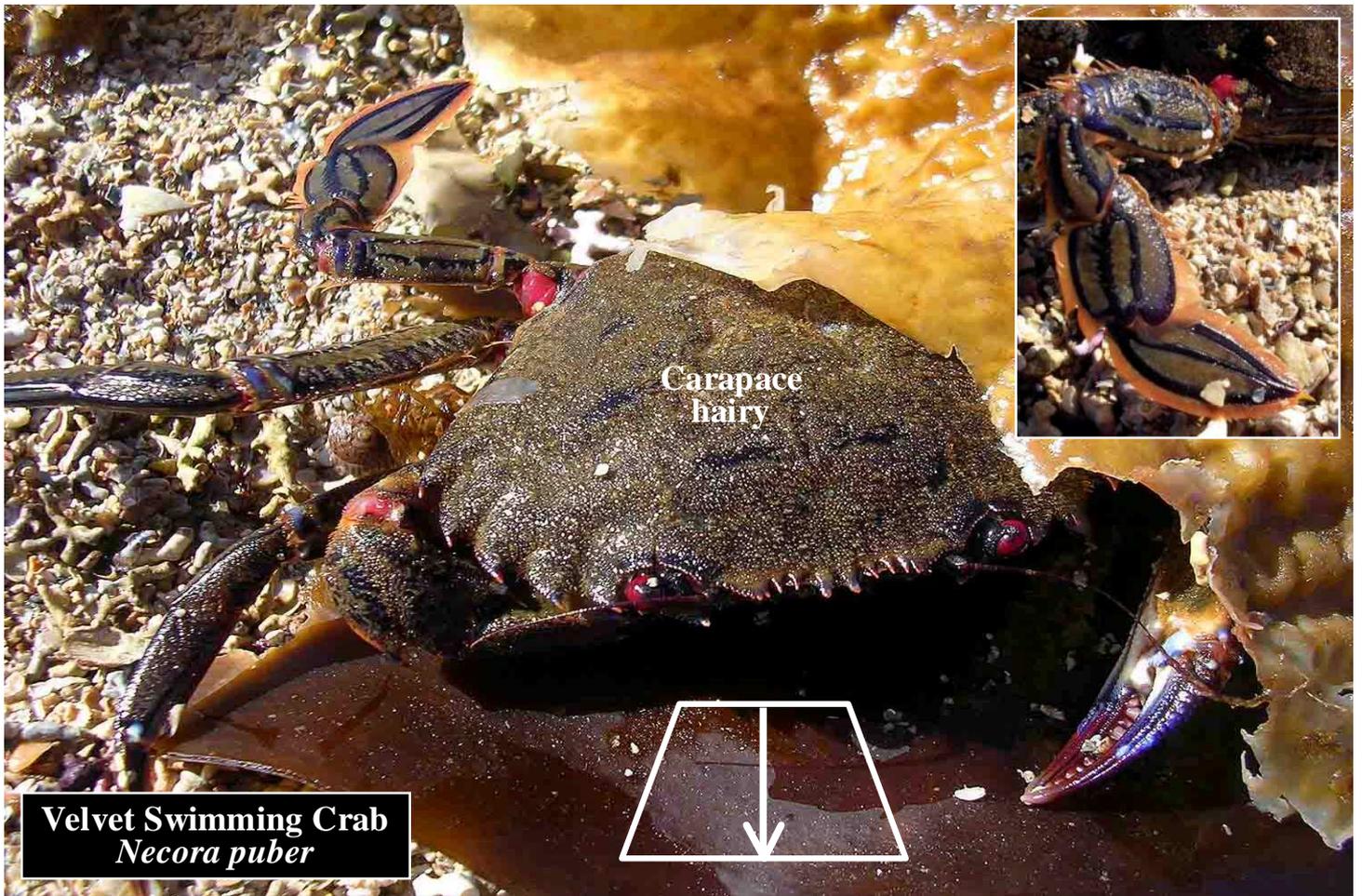


Acute
teeth

1 cm

Legs
hairy

Risso's Crab
Xantho pilipes

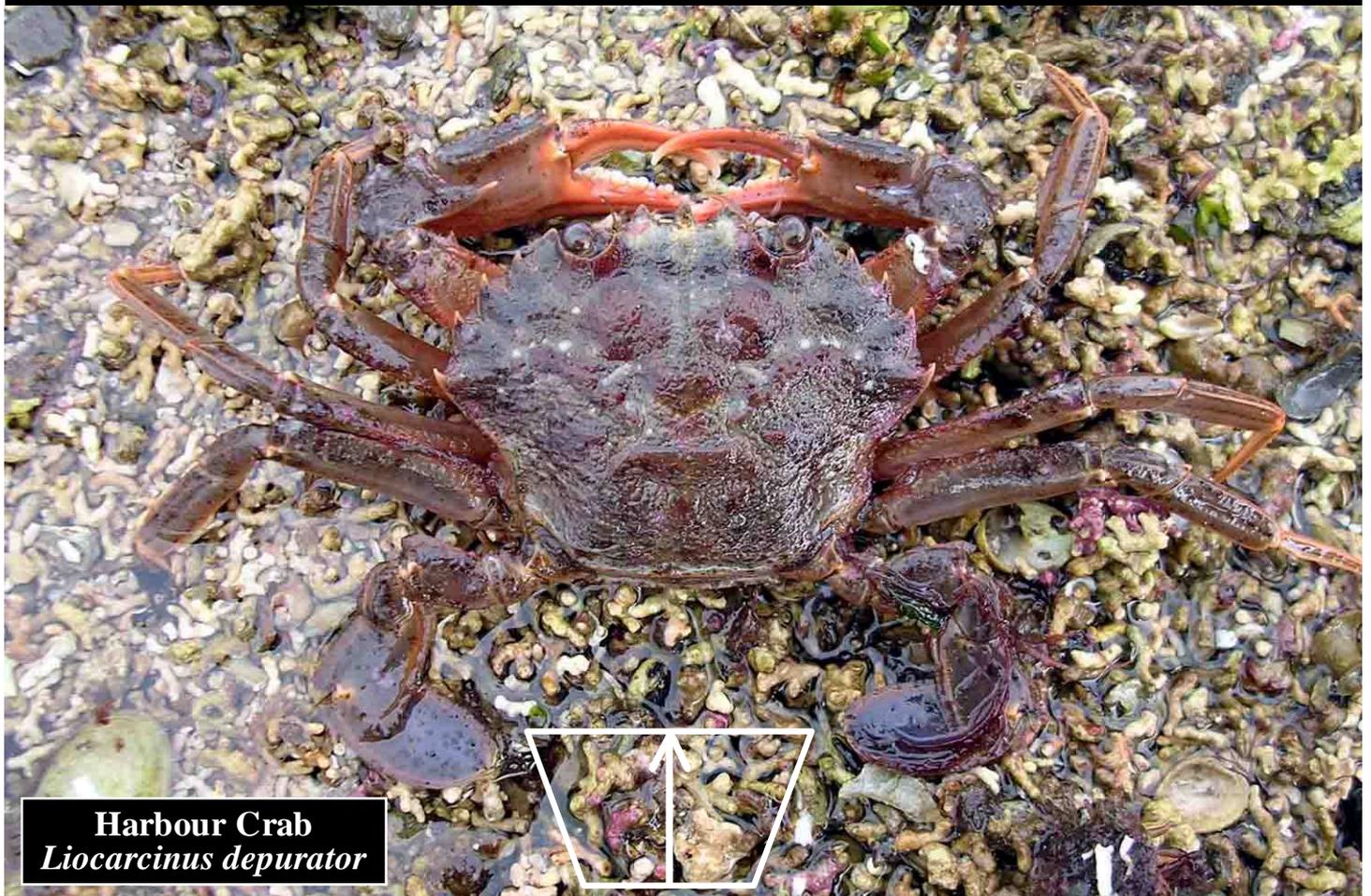


Velvet Swimming Crab
Necora puber

Carapace
hairy

PLATE 8

SWIMMING CRABS 1



Harbour Crab
Liocarcinus depurator



Marbled Swimming Crab
Liocarcinus marmoreus

PLATE 9

SWIMMING CRABS 2



Wrinkled Swimming Crab
Liocarcinus corrugatus