

UNWANTED



Photo – Natural History Museums

THE CHINESE MITTEN CRAB

(Eriocheir sinensis)

This large freshwater crab is a native of northern China, but appeared in the River Thames in 1935, where there is now a substantial population, and it has recently become established in the Northumberland Tyne. It can cross dry land to new waters and as a burrowing animal can cause extensive damage by undermining river banks. Its burrows can be up to 80cms deep and there can be as many as 50 per square metre. Its arrival here would bring a new and unpredictable factor for the fish and the fisheries of the Tweed as it eats fish eggs and larvae. Once established, alien freshwater species of any sort are extremely difficult to eradicate and their presence permanently changes the natural identity of the area, making it less distinctive and more like any other place. The only chance of control of invading species is if they are detected as soon as they arrive. This Crab gets its name from the distinctive “hair” on its claws, as shown on the small photograph, and so can be easily identified :



IF YOU SEE ONE OF THESE OR SOMETHING YOU THINK IS ONE, PLEASE CATCH IT AND PHONE THE RIVER TWEED COMMISSIONERS, 01896 848271, OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WATER BAILIFF

(NOTE: the “hair” is dry in this picture, when wet the “hair” is slicked down as in the large photo).