

Moon Crab (Halloween Crab)

(Gecarcinus quadratus)



Adult Size	Up to 2-4 inches
Life Span	5-10 years
Male/Female Differences	Males are typically brighter colored with red legs. Females have a washed out coloring typically with light orange legs.
Compatibility	This species of crab can be housed with other crabs of the same species. Bountiful hiding and cover areas should be provided to prevent food competition.
Origin	Pacific Coast, Peru, Costa Rica
Climate	High humidity coastal regions with plenty of brush.
Day Cycle	Nocturnal
Temperature	78°-85°
Lighting	A simple one lamp setup can be used for these critters. Low wattage white light should be used to achieve the above temperature, and then turned off at night. Alternatively a red heat bulb can be used to for nighttime viewing.
Humidity	80% Humidity is required for these coastal animals. Their substrate should be moistened daily to maintain a healthy level of humidity. Be careful and avoid over humidifying as saturated substrate can breed infection.
Habitat/Territory	Mangroves, Sand Dunes, and Rainforests
Substrate/Bedding	Ideally a Moon Crab tank is divided into 2 zones; A sand side and a humid coconut husk side. If this cannot be achieved a mix of sand substrate and "bark" bedding will be adequate. Read more about the options from our care guide about reptile substrates.
Hiding Place/Den	Moon Crabs spend most of their time burrowed underneath bark/sand. Many reports state the deeper the substrate, the healthier the animal. For this reason 6-12 inches of sand and coconut husk bedding is recommended. Other decoration such as terrarium plants and branches should also be provided as Moon Crabs are known to enjoy climbing over these.

Cage Type	The rule of thumb is a 20 gallon tank for the first Moon Crab, and 10 extra gallons for every additional Moon Crab to inhabit. Tall cages are also encouraged as the cages bottom floor will be stacked with burrowing substrate and the upper area filled with climbing branches. Moon crabs are escape artists so make sure to have a secure lid.
Diet	Omnivorous scavenger.
Supplements	A cuttlebone is a great addition to any Moon Crab tank which can provide them supplemental calcium. If no cuttlebone is offered, then consider sprinkling calcium powder on top of your daily food/vegetables.
Diet Precautions	Being scavengers these crustaceans can eat nearly anything. That being said avoid feeding too much and replace food daily, as crab stomachs are very small.
Feeding	A variety of vegetables, fruit, fish, and pelleted Moon Crab food should be offered. Peanut butter and scrambled eggs and nuts are all thing you can feed as well. Make sure to rotate the diet frequently.
Water Source	Two large water dishes should be in every cage. One a calcium powder/water mixture to provide sufficient minerals, and the other a marine salt and water mixture to mimic the coastal ocean. Water dechlorination drops or purified bottled water should be used for misting and water dishes. Any harsh water conditions can negatively affect your pet. The purified water also has the benefit of not leaving water marks on glass.
Grooming	Moon Crabs go through molting semi frequently. An owner should not disturb them during this time as they prefer privacy. The bottom level of the deep substrate should be kept moist (not wet) to ease the process.
Proper Handling	Allow your crab time to become accustomed to its new home before handling them. Handling them little by little over a period of time lets the animal get used to you and reduces stress. While these crabs are technically handleable, they can stress out from over handling and have the capacity to pinch hard. Handle with care.
Habitat Maintenance	Spot clean soiled areas and plants. Use vinegar to clean water spots on glass from misting. Every couple months replace substrate to prevent mold from growing. This is especially important as the substrate will be damp most of the time and can grow mold more quickly than other terrariums.
Health Concerns	Calcium deficiency is the most common health concern. By following the above recommended calcium supplementation it can be avoided entirely. The second most pressing issue is proper humidity. Find the balance between not soaking, nor bone dry substrate and you will have a happy, healthy Moon Crab!
