



## Moon/Halloween Crabs *Gecarcinus quadratus*

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- Also known as the Halloween, or Red Land crabs, this is a species of terrestrial land crab found in brackish swamps and wetlands, beaches/intertidal dunes, and tropical to semi tropical forests of coastal Mexico, central America, and northern South America.
- These terrestrial crabs are quite colorful, displaying bluish purple claws, reddish orange limbs and joints, and a darker black to bluish black carapace with reddish, yellowish, or orange spots, dashes or streaks behind the eyes.
- These crabs may live up to 5-10 years or more in captivity.

### Size

Moon/Halloween crabs are fairly large crabs that can reach up to 2-3” in size.

### Housing

Moon/Halloween crabs should be housed in a secure, sturdy, adequately ventilated terrarium, aquarium, or other enclosure. These crabs may be kept communally (meaning they are often found in groups), and multiple crabs can be housed together provided an adequately sized enclosure is accordingly provided, although males may fight. A 10-20 gallon or similar sized enclosure (or larger depending on the number of crabs maintained) is suitable. Crabs that are not provided adequate space may fight and possibly kill one another for resources. A substrate that enables these moon crabs to dig and burrow, as well as maintain adequate humidity should also be provided. Sand substrates as well as peat or sphagnum moss or mixtures thereof can be used for added security and stimuli including driftwood, artificial foliage, and hides in the form of log or slab hides, rocks, clay flower pots, or other commercially designed hides and cage decor. Adequate humidity is perhaps one of the most important factors for maintaining moon crabs, which should be around 70%. Provide at least two large, shallow water dishes that the crabs can readily enter or exit. A temperature gradient should also be provided in the enclosure, with around 70-85 degrees F for ambient and water temperatures. Crabs that are exposed to direct sunlight or heat constantly may overheat. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage UV or incandescent bulb.

### Feeding/Diet

In the wild, moon crabs are omnivorous scavengers, feeding on small bits of organic plant and animal matter they are able to locate during foraging.

In captivity, a varied, rotating diet for these crabs is recommend. A variety of fruit and vegetable matter will be eaten, as well as freeze dried plankton, krill, feeder crickets, mealworms, waxworms, bloodworms, or shrimp. An adequate calcium based diet and supplementation is suggested for these crabs. Further information on what constitutes a suitable vs. unsuitable hermit crab diet can be provided upon request.

### Handling

Moon crabs can be handled carefully, although they may pinch (which is not painful or dangerous). They can be allowed to walk on one’s hands. Care should be taken to not drop them, however, since this can fracture their shell and/or cause internal injury to them.

\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\*