



Crab Watchers Wanted: New Citizen Science Project to Monitor Crab Species

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How does finding a crab on the beach make you feel? Excited? Wary? Fascinated? By joining Crab Watch, a new citizen science project taking place across Europe, your search for these captivating creatures will have the added incentive of contributing to scientific research.

Crab Watch launches on 28 June 2017 and invites citizens across Europe to play a key role in the scientific process by gathering valuable data to enhance our knowledge of the changing distribution of native and non-native crabs. By establishing a network of Crab Watchers to record and report crab distribution, it is hoped that new arrivals will be detected early and appropriate environmental management action can then be taken quickly.

Crab Watch is an initiative of the EU-funded Sea Change project which aims to increase European citizens' understanding of the ocean's influence on us and our influence on the ocean, also known as "Ocean Literacy". By getting people to become Crab Watchers, visit their coastline and interact with marine creatures in a meaningful way, Sea Change hopes to encourage people to think positively about the ocean and to become advocates for healthy seas and a healthy planet.

Hannah Milburn from the Marine Biological Association, coordinators of Crab Watch and Sea Change, said: "Crabs are interesting creatures to search for when you're by the coast. You can find them in all marine and some freshwater habitats around Europe and they have great commercial and cultural significance in many countries. However, crabs are easily impacted by human activities, including warming seas, the introduction of invasive species and overexploitation. This makes them an ideal subject to help demonstrate how our ocean is changing and what the impacts are."

You can find everything you need to become a Crab Watcher, including the Crab App (coming soon), on the Sea Change website: <http://seachangeproject.eu/ouroceanourhealth/crab-watch>. Resources in a number of languages will be available in the coming weeks.

Notes for Editors

The **Sea Change** project is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement n° 652644. The project began in March 2015 and will run until February 2018. The Marine Biological Association, UK (MBA) is coordinating the project. AquaTT is the project dissemination partner.

More information on citizen science is available in the recently published European Marine Board Position Paper 23 on 'Advancing Citizen Science for Coastal and Ocean Research'.

For Crab Watch enquiries email crabwatch@mba.ac.uk

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Figure 1 - 13 motivated young people participating in the Spanish Crab Watch,



Figure 2 - 'Crabby' crafts at a Crab Watch event