



OCEAN
OBSERVATORY
BERWICKSHIRE



VELVET SWIMMING CRAB

Scientific name: *Necora puber*

Size: up to 10cm wide

Conservation Status: common

Distinctive Features: red eyes, blue joints, velvety shell texture due to a coating of fine hairs

Also known as: the Devil Crab or Fighter Crab

**FEATURED
CREATURE!**

This velvet swimming crab is hiding under an anemone. Despite being infamously aggressive, velvet swimming crabs still need to hide to sneak up on their prey. They also need to hide from their predators, which are often larger crabs! They can be found in sheltered rock pools, all the way down to depths of about 100m.



This velvet swimming crab is eating a juvenile fish! They are ferocious predators, and catch small fish and shrimps using their paddle-like back legs to swim quickly underwater. Like most crabs, they are also scavengers, so will happily eat algae, and leftovers from other marine hunters! Watch the video to see velvet swimming crabs attacking some bait left by the Blue Marine scientists.

Moulting

The velvet swimming crab has a skeleton on the outside of its body, rather than on the inside like we do. This is called an *exoskeleton*. How would your body grow if you were surrounded by a hard exoskeleton? Crabs manage this by moulting. This means that, a bit like a snake shedding its skin, crabs will break out of their old shell when they get too big for it. This reveals a soft shell underneath which can expand and allow the crab to get bigger! Click copy this link to see moulting in action! bit.ly/moultingcrab

