



GET TO KNOW THE GULF:

Gulf Fiddler Crab

story by **Christina Mohrman** photo by **Kyle Moon**

CLASSIFICATION

CLASS: Crustacea
FAMILY: Ocypodidae
GENUS: *Minuca*
SPECIES: *longisignalis*

FUN FACTS

- Fiddler crabs live in coastal salt marshes; they are found in the soft sand or mud along the edges of marsh creeks.
- Fiddler crabs live in burrows and use them as a place to escape from predators, sleep, and stay out of the cold in the winter months.
- During high tide, fiddler crabs pack sand or mud at the entrance of their burrow to keep the water out.
- Male fiddler crabs are distinctive for having one large claw and one small claw. The species gets its common name from the way males wave their large claw back and forth, like playing a fiddle, to get the attention of female crabs.
- Fiddler crabs eat algae and decaying marsh plants and use their small claw for feeding. Since males only have one small claw, they have to work twice as hard as the females to eat!
- Fiddler crabs are a key part of the salt marsh food chain. Predators include birds such as herons and egrets, raccoons, and diamondback terrapins. They can also make good bait!
- If a fiddler crab loses their claw, they can grow it back!

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