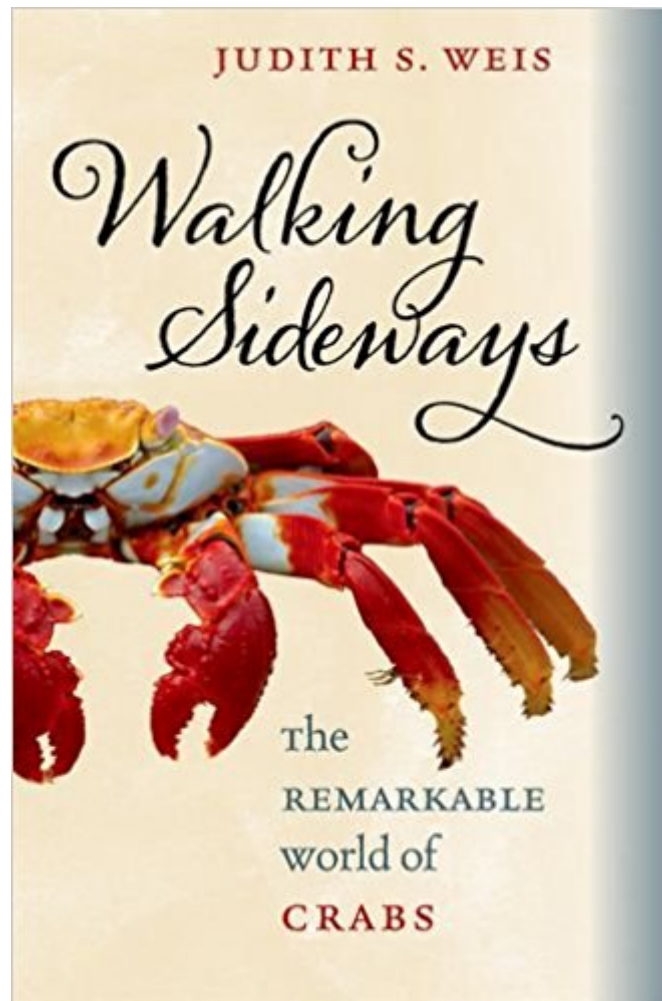


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Walking Sideways: The Remarkable World Of Crabs



Synopsis

The world's nearly 7,000 species of crabs are immediately recognizable by their claws, sideways movement, stalked eyes, and thick outer shells. These common crustaceans are found internationally, thriving in various habitats from the edge of the sea to the depths of the ocean, in fresh water or on land. Despite having the same basic body type as decapod crustaceans, true crabs have heavy exoskeletons and ten limbs with front pincer claws. Crabs come in an enormous variety of shapes and sizes, from the near microscopic to the giant Japanese spider crab. In *Walking Sideways*, Judith S. Weis provides an engaging and informative tour of the remarkable world of crabs, highlighting their unique biology and natural history. She introduces us to recently discovered crabs such as the Yeti crab found in deep sea vents, explains what scientists are learning about blue and hermit crabs commonly found at the shore, and gives us insight into the lifecycles of the king and Dungeness crabs typically seen only on dinner plates. Among the topics Weis covers are the evolution and classification of crabs, their habitats, unique adaptations to water and land, reproduction and development, behavior, ecology, and threats, including up-to-date research. Crabs are of special interest to biologists for their communication behaviors, sexual dimorphism, and use of chemical stimuli and touch receptors, and Weis explains the importance of new scientific discoveries. In addition to the traditional ten-legged crabs, the book also treats those that appear eight-legged, including hermit crabs, king crabs, and sand crabs. Sidebars address topics of special interest, such as the relationship of lobsters to crabs and medical uses of compounds derived from horseshoe crabs (which aren't really crabs). While Weis emphasizes conservation and the threats that crabs face, she also addresses the use of crabs as food (detailing how crabs are caught and cooked) and their commercial value from fisheries and aquaculture. She highlights other interactions between crabs and people, including keeping hermit crabs as pets or studying marine species in the laboratory and field. Reminding us of characters such as *The Little Mermaid's* Sebastian and Sherman Lagoon's Hawthorne, she also surveys the role of crabs in literature (for both children and adults), film, and television, as well in mythology and astrology. With illustrations that offer delightful visual evidence of crab diversity and their unique behaviors, *Walking Sideways* will appeal to anyone who has encountered these fascinating animals on the beach, at an aquarium, or in the kitchen.

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Customer Reviews

Being a crab fancier I could not resist the title "Walking Sideways" and ordered the book as soon as I saw it advertised. This is the most pleasure I have had from a crab book since George Warner's "Biology of Crabs" in 1977. Although I'm a non-professional marine biologist I've been watching crabs for over 60 years and never fail to find something new about them. "Popular" crab literature that summarises and interprets scientific publications is sparse indeed so this new book is very welcome. "Walking Sideways" is full of precise scientific information, presented with a light touch in a readable manner. It is well illustrated and well referenced. From the epigraph by William Beebe ("If we live out our span of life on the earth without ever knowing a crab intimately, we have missed a good friendship") to the concluding plea for conservation the book is a pleasure to read.

...is a remarkable creature called a crab. Judith Weis' "Walking Sideways" is a breezy, informative exploration of all things crab-wise. In a highly accessible style, Weis describes the various types of crabs, their habitats, habits, fisheries, and their relationship with humankind. This reviewer found the chapter on crab fisheries to be the most interesting. Others may be surprised by the considerable range of environments inhabited by crabs, from land to fresh water to salt water to the deep sea bottom. Still others may be impressed by the sheer diversity of crabs, from tiny pea crabs to massive king crabs. The book includes a nice selection of color and black-and-white photographs. "Walking Sideways" will be of interest to the general reader but also worthwhile to others with working knowledge of the sea. Highly recommended.

It may not sound much to read something like "This is the best book on crabs I have ever read"

because how many books are there? Actually a number and yes, this is the best. It's authoritative, beautifully written, and for most readers will be a good and informative read. If you don't find crabs interesting, skip the book, because you will not understand how a writer this good can, well, love crabs. It's all here, what are they, their physiology, how they are caught, how they are cooked, what uses crabs can be put to, what other animals eat them, what they look like, some crab research. The book has lots of fascinating details. I am intrigued by the Shamefaced Crab, and who knew that in Indonesia there is a species of frog that enters saltwater to catch and eat crabs. That kind of wonderful detail, not as part of a collection of oddities but part of the fullness of the huge variety of crabs. Not everyone is interested in crabs, but if you have any interest in them at all, this is a book to read.

The Remarkable World of Crabs Walking Sideway is an excellent introduction to the group of animals known as crabs. The writing is easily readable for the non-scientists and at the same time authoritative with sufficient references to allow the interested reader to follow up on topics of interest. I recommend it to biologists and non-scientists as an excellent introduction.

This book actually does what it says it's going to do, which is provide the reader with a lot of information about crabs. I brought it on a whim, and after 30 pages thought, why am I reading a book about crabs, am I actually going to finish this? 3 days later I did. Unfortunately we live a long way from the sea, but the book rather made me want to take myself off to the seaside pronto to find some crabs to look at. I didn't like the section on "Eating Crabs" much - after reading 180 pages about how interesting they are, I don't think I fancy crab meat any more.

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