

New rules for blue swimmer crab fishing in Perth and the South West

New measures are being introduced to protect blue swimmer crab breeding stock and safeguard the future of this popular species.

- All waters, rivers and estuaries from the Swan River to Minninup Beach (15km south of Bunbury) are closed to recreational and commercial crab fishing between 1 September and 30 November.
- A new bag limit of **5 crabs** per fisher will be introduced for the Swan and Canning Rivers from 1 December 2019.
- Geographe Bay will remain open to recreational blue swimmer crab fishing all year, however a maximum of **5 female crabs** will be allowed as part of the 10 crab bag limit per fisher from 1 December 2019.
- The State Government will start the process to buy back commercial licences from oceanic crab fisheries (Cockburn Sound, Warnbro Sound and the Mandurah to Bunbury Developmental Fishery) followed by closure to commercial fishing in these areas.

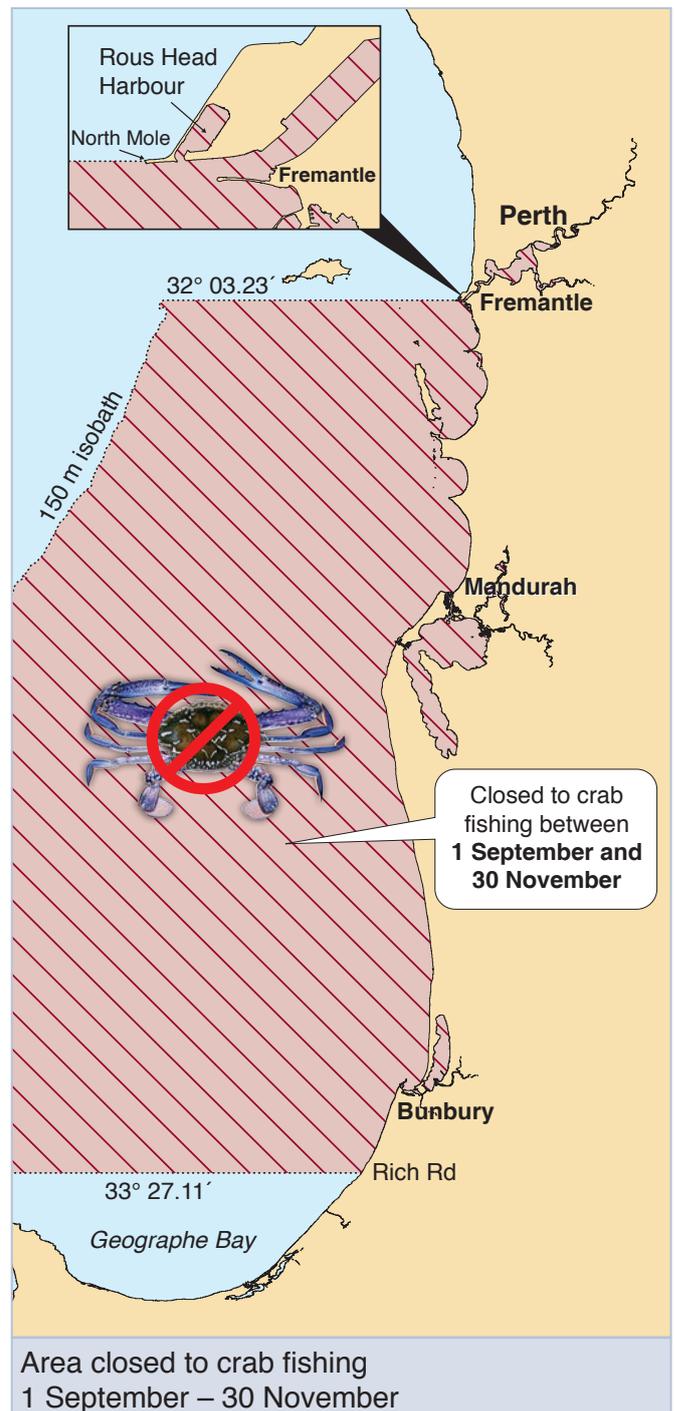
Closed season

1 September to 30 November

It is illegal to fish for blue swimmer crabs or be in possession of blue swimmer crabs in the closed area during the closed season.

The closed area includes all waters, rivers and estuaries from the Swan River to Rich Road at Minninup Beach.

This closure includes the popular crab fishing areas of the Swan and Canning Rivers, and extends the existing closure in the Peel-Harvey Estuary by a month.



Rules by region

Swan and Canning Rivers

- Closed to recreational and commercial crab fishing from 1 September to 30 November.
- A new bag limit of 5 crabs per fisher will apply from 1 December 2019.
- Boat limit is unchanged (20 crabs). From 1 December 2019, four fishers must have recreational fishing from boat licences (RFBL) to catch the boat limit of 20. If only two or three fishers have an RFBL then the maximum number of crabs permitted on a boat would be 10 or 15 respectively.

Peel-Harvey Estuary

- Closed to recreational and commercial crab fishing from 1 September to 30 November (extending the previous closure period by a month).
- Bag limit is unchanged (10 crabs).
- Boat limit is unchanged (20 crabs).

Geographe Bay

- From 1 December 2019, a limit of 5 female crabs will be allowed in the existing 10 crab bag limit.
- Boat limit is unchanged (20 crabs, but a limit of 10 female crabs will apply from 1 December 2019).
- Open to crab fishing all year.

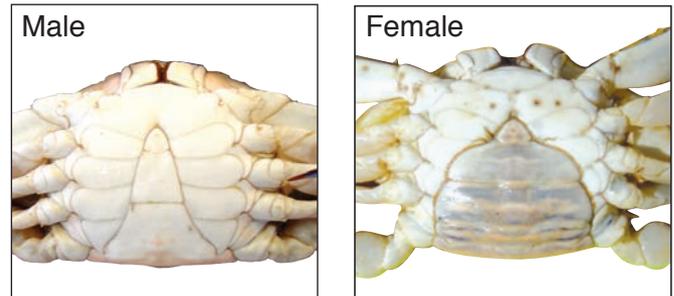
Cockburn Sound

- Remains closed to recreational blue swimmer crab fishing.

Identifying male and female crabs

Male blue swimmer crabs are bigger and more colourful than the females, with a dark-blue carapace, pale belly and rich blue on their legs and claws. Females crabs are a mottled brown. Males also have longer claws in proportion to their carapace than females.

The easiest way to check if a blue swimmer crab is male or female is to turn it upside down and look at the V-shaped abdominal flap on its underside. A male's flap is narrow and angular, while a female's flap is broad and rounded.



Reasons for change

These rule changes were made following a review of the South West Blue Swimmer Crab resource, which found that additional protection to female crab breeding stock was required while they were mated and vulnerable to capture.

Recfishwest, the Western Australian Fisheries Industry Council and the Southern Seafood Producers Association were extensively involved in developing the new arrangements.

The changes will help ensure healthy crab stocks for future generations to enjoy.

Important disclaimer

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