

# Crabbing for blue swimmer crabs in the west coast region



## Closed seasons:

- **Cockburn Sound:** Closed to crab fishing until further notice.
- **Peel-Harvey Estuary near Mandurah** (all waters upstream from the ocean): Closed to all crab fishing 1 September to 31 October.

These rules are in place to ensure crab populations in the West Coast Bioregion remain sustainable. This region runs from Black Point, east of Augusta, to the Zuytdorp Cliffs, north of Kalbarri (all land and water south of 27° S and west of 115° 30' E) and also includes the Abrolhos Islands.

## Daily bag limit

You are allowed **10** crabs per person per day. You must not catch crabs for anyone else.



## Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL)

If you use a powered boat to fish for crabs or to reach your fishing location, at least one person on board needs an RFBL. You can buy an RFBL from our website or offices.

## Boat limit (boat possession limit)

You are allowed a possession limit of **20** crabs per boat when there are 2 or more people on board. If it is a powered boat, 2 or more people on board must **each** hold an RFBL. If there is only one person holding an RFBL on board a powered boat, a boat limit of only **10** crabs applies (i.e. the daily bag limit of the person who has the licence).

## Minimum size limit 127 mm

Measure each crab from the tips of the spikes across the widest part of the shell. Measure accurately using a crab gauge available from tackle shops. (Using anything else to measure with, such as a drink can or ruler, can lead to mistakes.)



## Immediate release

Keeping undersize crabs or egg-carrying ('berried') females is illegal and you could be fined up to \$5,000. These crabs must be returned to the water immediately, before attempting to catch another crab.

## Uncooked crabs

All uncooked crabs must be kept in whole form, unless being prepared for immediate consumption. Any mutilation of sea creatures is an offence and carries a maximum fine of \$5,000 for an individual.

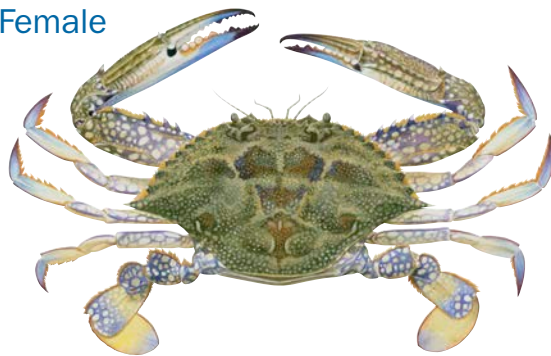
## Identification

Male crabs are coloured a rich blue on the legs and claws. Female crabs are usually a mottled brown. Berried (egg-carrying) females have a spongy mass of eggs underneath.

### Male



### Female



### Berried female – must be returned to the water



## Approved crabbing gear

Crabs must only be caught by hand or using hand-held wire or plastic scoop nets, drop nets or hand-held blunt wire hooks. Hooks must not be capable of piercing the crab.

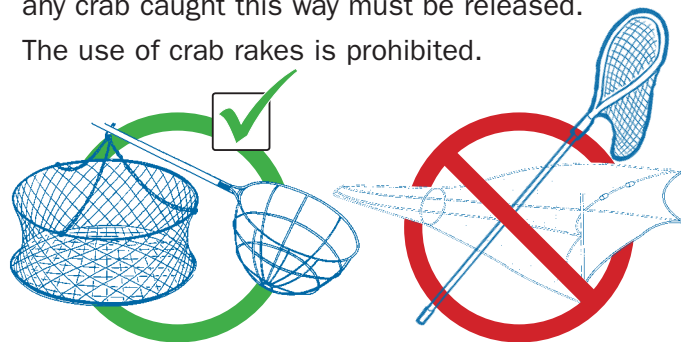
Scoop nets must be bowl-shaped and made of rigid mesh not capable of entangling a crab. Scoop nets must be no deeper than 210 mm; the internal diameter must be no bigger than 375 mm.

Drop nets must be no more than 1.5 m in diameter. There is a maximum limit of 10 drop nets per person or 10 drop nets per boat, regardless of how many people are on board.

Diving for crabs is also permitted.

Catching crabs by any other method including fishing nets or prawn trawls or dip nets is illegal – any crab caught this way must be released.

The use of crab rakes is prohibited.



## Important disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

This publication is to provide assistance or information. It is only a guide and does not replace the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* or the *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995*. It cannot be used as a defence in a court of law. The information provided is current at the date of printing but may be subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on fishing and full details of legislation contact your local Fisheries office or visit [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au)

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(08) 9721 2688

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### BUSSELTON DISTRICT OFFICE

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Busselton WA 6280  
(08) 9752 2152

### FREMANTLE DISTRICT OFFICE (and Metropolitan Regional Office)

14 Capo D'Orlando Drive  
South Fremantle WA 6162  
(08) 9432 8000

### GERALDTON DISTRICT OFFICE (and Midwest Regional Office)

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### MANDURAH DISTRICT OFFICE

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Mandurah Ocean Marina  
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