

Crabbing for blue swimmer crabs in the west coast region



Closed seasons:

- **Cockburn Sound:** Closed to crab fishing until further notice.
- **Swan River to Minninup Beach (Rich Rd, 15km south of Bunbury):** Closed to all crab fishing 1 September to 30 November. This includes all waters, rivers and estuaries in this area.

These rules are in place to ensure crab populations in the west coast region 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

Swan and Canning Rivers*:
5 crabs per person per day.

Geographe Bay*: A maximum of **5 female** crabs as part of a **10** crab bag limit per person per day.



All other areas: 10 crabs per person per day.

You must not catch crabs for anyone else.

*daily bag limit changes take effect 1 December 2019

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.

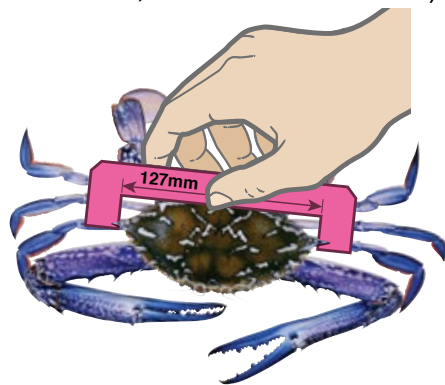
Boat limit (boat possession limit)

You are allowed a possession limit of **20** crabs per boat when there are 2 or more people on board, or 4 or more people on board in the Swan and Canning Rivers. In Geographe Bay, you can have a maximum of 10 female crabs on board as part of your 20 crab boat possession limit.

To catch the boat limit in a day on a powered boat, 2 or more people on board (or 4 or more where a 5 crab bag limit applies) must **each** hold an RFBL. If there is only one person holding an RFBL on board a powered boat, the number of crabs that can be taken in a day is equal to the bag limit for that area.

Minimum size limit 127mm

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.

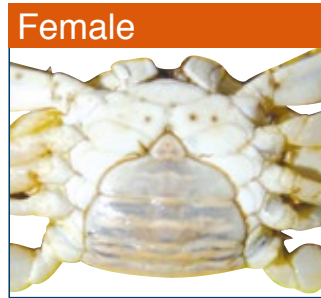
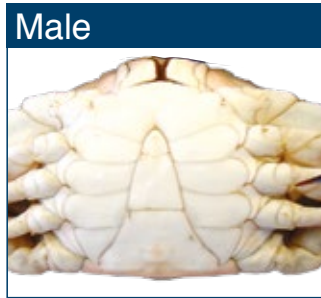
Uncooked crabs

All uncooked crabs must be kept in whole form, unless being prepared for immediate consumption.

Identification

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.



Berried (egg-carrying) females have a spongy mass of eggs underneath. Berried females must be returned to the water immediately.



Approved crabbing gear

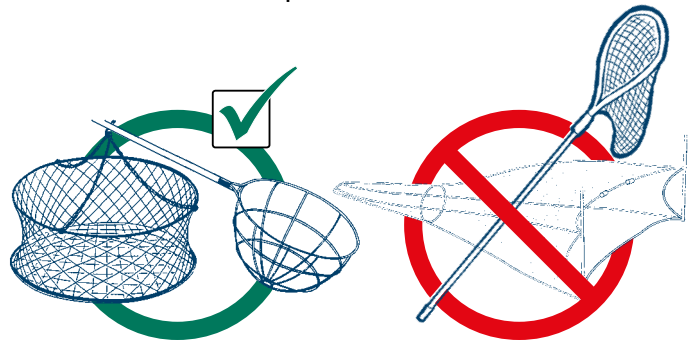
Crabs must only be caught by hand or using hand-held wire or plastic scoop nets, drop nets or hand-held blunt wire hooks. Hooks must not be capable of piercing the crab.

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

Drop nets must be no more than 1.5m 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.



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