

Mud crab fishery

Commercial fishing rules in Queensland

From 1 September 2021, the mud crab fishery will be managed under the *Queensland mud crab harvest strategy*.

General

- The fishery is split into two management regions with species-specific catch limits:
 - east coast mud crab (tidal waters east of longitude 142° 31.49' east)
 - Gulf of Carpentaria mud crab (tidal waters west of 142° 31.49' east).
- Catch is quota-managed under a total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for mud crab in each of the regions. The TACC is allocated amongst individual transferable quota units.
- Mud crab quota units are required for each management region:
 - EC1 – east coast mud crab
 - GC1 – Gulf of Carpentaria mud crab.
- The mud crab fishing seasons (east coast and Gulf of Carpentaria) run from 1 July to 30 June annually.
- The Hervey Bay crab area consists of tidal waters south of the line between Burrum Point and Moon Point, and west of Inskip Point and Hook Point.
- The Moreton Bay crab area consists of tidal waters within Moreton Bay
- Measurements of vessels used in commercial fisheries are determined by national marine safety requirements under the National Standard for Commercial Vessels – for more information, visit amsa.gov.au.
- Other Australian Government requirements include displaying unique identifying numbers, safety management plans, safety equipment and licensing – for more information, visit amsa.gov.au.

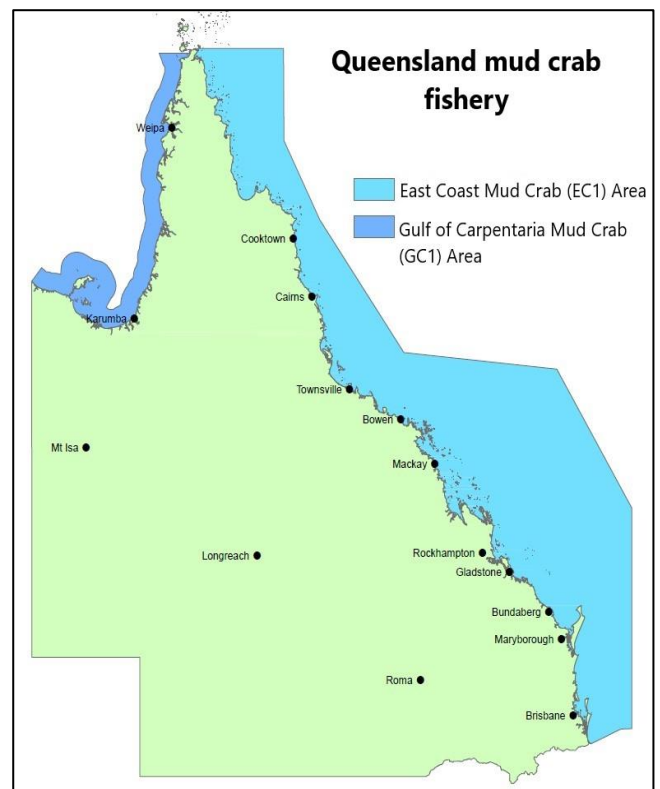


Figure 1: Mud crab fishery areas

Minimum quota requirement

- The licence holder must have **at least 1.2 t of quota entitlements** for the relevant management region (i.e. Gulf of Carpentaria or east coast) before they are allowed to fish in that management region.
- Quota entitlement is the amount of quota units the licence holder holds or leases and is allowed to use during the fishing season.

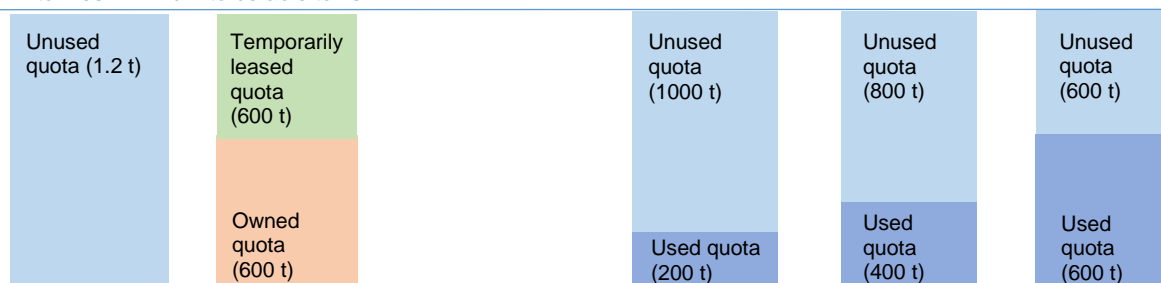
The quota entitlement amount does not decrease as fishing activity occurs. However, this amount can increase or decrease if quota units are permanently or temporarily transferred into or out of the licence holder's account.

Quota entitlement is calculated as follows:

Quota entitlement = opening quota balance + quota transferred in – quota transferred out

- Quota entitlement is different to quota balance. The quota balance is the weight of product that can be landed per unit, the quota balance will decrease as fishing activity occurs, as well as increase or decrease as quota units are transferred into or out of the account.
- The licence holder can check their quota entitlement at any time through the automated interactive voice response (AIVR) system and on FishNet Secure.

1.2 tonnes minimum to be able to fish



You must have a minimum of 1.2 tonnes of quota holdings to fish.

For example, this may be made up of:

- 600 tonnes of quota owned by you
- 600 tonnes temporarily leased from another fisher.

As fishing continues, you need to maintain a minimum of 1.2 tonnes in your quota holdings to be allowed to continue fish.

This total is composed of:

- used quota
- **plus**
- unused quota that you hold at the time of fishing.

Equipment

- Number of crab apparatus that can be used at the same time to take mud crab:
 - licence with one C1 fishery symbol – 50
 - licence with two or more C1 fishery symbols – 100 (no more than 100 items of crab apparatus can be used in the Hervey Bay or Moreton Bay crab areas).
- A primary vessel can be up to 25 m long.
- A tender vessel can be up to 10 m long.
- No more than 10 pots may be fixed to a single line (trotline) or attached to each other in sequence.
- Unable to use two or more pots fixed to a single line or attached to each other in sequence in Moreton Bay and waters of the Great Sandy Strait between Point Vernon and Moon Point.
- All commercial mud crab apparatus must have rigid escape vents installed on the bottom edge of the apparatus with either:
 - one large rectangular escape vent (rectangular opening of at least 120 mm long x 50 mm wide) with the bottom edge positioned parallel to the base of the apparatus
 - or
 - two small rectangular escape vents (rectangular opening of at least 75 mm long x 60 mm wide) with the bottom edge positioned parallel to the base of the apparatus
 - or
 - one round escape vent (round opening with a diameter of at least 105 mm).

- Marking crab apparatus:

Crab apparatus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have a tag attached detailing the owner's name or boat mark of the primary boat being used
Tying apparatus to a fixed object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crab apparatus must be attached by rope to a fixed object above the high water mark • Must have a tag attached to the rope above the high water mark detailing the boat mark of the primary boat being used
Tying apparatus to a float	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crab apparatus must be attached by rope to a float no less than 15 cm in any dimension • Floats must be solid, light-coloured and clearly visible on the surface of the water; and marked with the boat mark for the primary boat being used
Two items of crab apparatus fixed to a line (trotline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One end of the line must have two floats attached that are no less than 15 cm in any dimension • Floats must be solid, light-coloured and clearly visible on the surface of the water; and marked with the boat mark for the primary boat being used
Three or more items of crab apparatus fixed to a line (trotline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One end of the line must have a float attached that is no less than 25 cm in any dimension • The other end of the line must have a flag attached to a float that is at least 2 m above the water • A tag must be attached to the line near the float or flag detailing the number of crab apparatus that are attached to the line

Fishing operation

- The minimum legal size for mud crab is 15 cm across the widest part of its carapace.
- Female mud crabs are regulated and must be immediately removed from crab apparatus and returned to the water.
- Immediately remove all regulated crabs from equipment and return to the water.
- An approved vessel tracking unit must be:
 - installed as per the department's *Vessel tracking installation and maintenance standard*
 - installed on vessel/s and confirmed working prior to commencement of a fishing trip.
- Under Queensland fisheries legislation, an assistant fisher is no longer required to be within 800 m of a commercial fisher. However, Australian Maritime Safety Authority safety rules apply – for more information, visit amsa.gov.au.
- Fishers are allowed to fish in multiple quota-managed crab fisheries on the same fishing trip – mud, blue swimmer and spanner crab.
- All commercial crabbing apparatus must be attended within a seven-day period of being set.
- Fishers must comply with marine park and go-slow zoning – for more information, visit gbrmpa.qld.gov.au and/or des.qld.gov.au.
- The best practice guideline recommends that you make sure crab apparatus is deployed in sufficient water to prevent trapped marine animals being exposed to the sun at any stage of the tide.

Post-harvest possession requirements

- Holders of a licence with a C1 symbol and an accreditation under the *Food Production (Safety) Act 2000* can process and possess crab meat on land.
- A business can possess crab meat if selling wholesale or retail.
- A person can possess crab meat if they have a sales docket from the seller for the product.

Licensing

- Fees for licences and quota are invoiced in advance (i.e. before the fishing season starts or before the licence can be used).
- Fishers must have a primary commercial fishing licence, at least one C1 symbol and sufficient quota to operate in the fishery.
- The person in charge of an operation must hold a commercial fisher licence to operate under a primary commercial fishing licence.
- The licence holder is responsible for keeping contact details up to date on FishNet Secure.
- You may require accreditation with Safe Food in order to legally sell or supply your product in Queensland – for more information, visit safefood.qld.gov.au.

Reporting requirements

In summary, fishers must:

- report trip/catch notices for all catch to which a TACC applies via approved means (e.g. Automated Interactive Voice Response system)
- complete catch and effort logbooks and the threatened, endangered and protected animal logbook
- complete catch disposal records for the disposal of all catch to which a TACC applies
- keep sale dockets for all wholesale sales for 5 years, including to businesses involved in the processing and storage of fisheries resources.

For more information on reporting requirements, visit fisheries.qld.gov.au.