

# Blue swimmer crab fishery

## Commercial fishing rules in Queensland

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

### General

- The blue swimmer crab management regions with species-specific catch limits comprises of the whole Queensland coastline and waterways.
- Catch is quota-managed under a total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for blue swimmer crab. The TACC is allocated amongst individual transferable quota units.
- Blue swimmer crab quota units (BC1) are required to fish in the blue swimmer crab management region.
- The blue swimmer crab fishing season runs 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](https://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](https://amsa.gov.au).

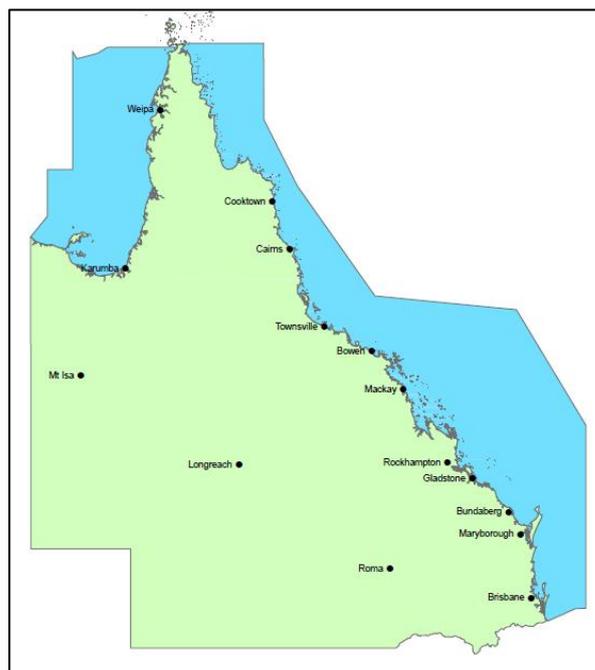


Figure 1: Blue swimmer crab fishery

### Equipment

- Number of crab apparatus that can be used at the same time:
  - licence with one C1 fishery symbol – 50
  - licence with two C1 fishery symbols – 100
  - licence with three C1 fishery symbols – 150 (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 (whole) waters south of latitude 27°18.430' south and waters of the Great Sandy Strait between Point Vernon and Moon Point.
- Any crab apparatus used to take mud crab must have escape vents installed.
- Marking crab apparatus:

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|---|---|
| <b>Crab apparatus</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have a tag attached detailing the owner's name or boat mark of the primary boat being used</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Tying apparatus to a fixed object</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crab apparatus must be attached by rope to a fixed object above the high water mark</li> <li>• Must have a tag attached to the rope above the high water mark detailing the boat mark of the primary boat being used</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Tying apparatus to a float</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crab apparatus must be attached by rope to a float no less than 15 cm in any dimension</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Two items of crab apparatus fixed to a line (trotline)</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One end of the line must have two floats attached that are no less than 15 cm in any dimension</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Three or more items of crab apparatus fixed to a line (trotline)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One end of the line must have a float attached that is no less than 25 cm in any dimension</li> <li>• The other end of the line must have a flag attached to a float that is at least 2 m above the water</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> |

## Fishing operation

- Minimum legal size for blue swimmer crab is 11.5 cm between the notch at the base of the large lateral spine on one side of the crab and the notch at the base of the large lateral spine on the other side of the crab.
- 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.

For more information, visit [fisheries.gov.au](http://fisheries.gov.au).

- 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](http://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 7-day period of being set.
- Fishers must comply with marine park, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and go-slow zoning.

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- Best practice for responsible crabbing:
    - use non-buoyant or weighted ropes so the apparatus hangs below the water's surface, minimising the chance of entanglement of marine animals and hazard reduction for other water activities
    - remove apparatus from the water when not actively fishing.
  - Fishers must comply with marine park and go-slow zoning – for more information, visit [gbrmpa.qld.gov.au](http://gbrmpa.qld.gov.au) and/or [des.qld.gov.au](http://des.qld.gov.au).

### 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.
- A range of transactions can be completed online using FishNet Secure (e.g. quota temporary transfers, registering vessel tracking units to primary commercial fishing licences, accessing quota activity statements and registering change of personal contact details).
- 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](http://safefood.qld.gov.au).

## Reporting requirements

In summary, fishers must:

- report trip/catch notices for all catch to which a total allowable commercial catch (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](http://fisheries.qld.gov.au).