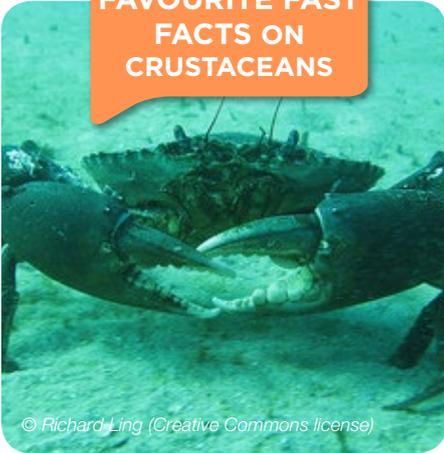


Crustaceans

Fact Sheet



FAVOURITE FAST FACTS ON CRUSTACEANS



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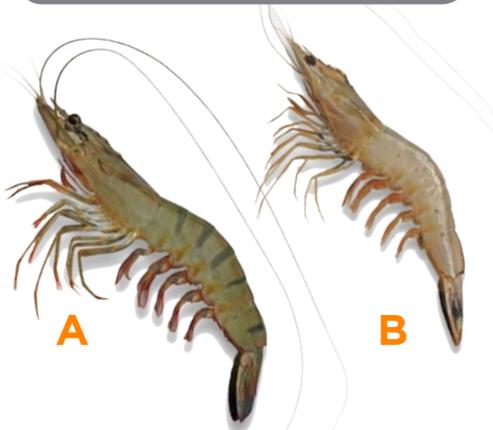
1 Prawns have 10 pairs of legs - five pairs for swimming and five pairs for walking on the bottom of their habitat!

2 The width of a mud crab's carapace can reach 100 millimetres in about a year.

3 Most crustaceans use gills to take oxygen out of the water to breathe.

4 Prawns do not have a backbone. When you de-vein a prawn, you're actually removing its digestive tract.

5 To scare predators away, the ornate spiny lobster will rub its antennae against its head to make a loud grinding sound.



A. Giant tiger prawn *Penaeus monodon*
B. Banana prawn *Fenneropenaeus merguensis*

Introducing crustaceans of the Gladstone Region

Crustaceans are a type of invertebrate (an animal without a backbone) called an arthropod. Arthropods have a body made up of many parts and jointed limbs. Unlike other arthropods (such as insects and spiders), crustaceans have two pairs of antennae!

There are more than 50,000 known species of crustacean, and these animals can be found in or close to the ocean, in freshwater environments like rivers and dams, or on land. You can even find some crustaceans like barnacles attached to other living organisms including coral, whales and turtles!

Gladstone is home to many different types of crustacean, and some of the most common include:

- Prawns - Tiger (*Penaeus monodon*) and banana (*Penaeus merguensis*) prawns live in coastal waters as well as in rivers and creeks.
- Crabs - Sometimes called 'muddies', green mud crabs (*Scylla serrata*) are big, powerful crustaceans with a smooth shell (or carapace), and large claws that are able to crush shells – and fingers and toes if you're not careful!
- Lobsters, like the ornate spiny lobster (*Panulirus ornatus*), are usually found around rocky outcrops and coral reefs in water less than 20m deep.
- Freshwater crayfish or 'yabbies' look like small lobsters but with large and powerful claws (for their size). The orange-fingered yabbie (*Cherax depressus*) is the most common yabbie species in Queensland and a favourite of Gladstone fishers.
- Barnacles - look quite different to other crustaceans and many people wrongly think they are part of the mollusc group!

Risks to these species

- The taking of female crabs is illegal because it could eventually have a major impact on a healthy and sustainable population.
- Lots of people love to eat mud crabs and prawns and overfishing (catching them faster than they can reproduce) can wipe out local populations – so stick to Queensland Fisheries' limits!
- Mangrove forests, coral reefs and seagrass meadows are very important nurseries for many crustaceans and damage to these ecosystems can upset the aquatic food chain!

Banana prawns

- Banana prawn bodies are often yellow or translucent, speckled with reddish-brown dots.
- Prawns 'moult' just like snakes and need to shed their shell to grow.
- Besides humans who love seafood, squid, cuttlefish, dolphins, whales, starfish, and demersal (bottom-dwelling) fish also prey on juvenile and adult prawns.
- Prawns eyes glow ruby red in artificial light.
- Banana prawns are delicious to eat and often have a sweeter taste than other types of prawn.

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Mud crab

- A mud crab's claw will remain in a vice-like grip even if it is separated from the crab. They use these claws to open mussels and other shellfish, so they have to be strong!
- Mud crabs can grow to more than 25cm across their shells and weigh more than 2 kilograms.
- Crabs don't grow constantly; they shed (or moult) their shell when they grow too big for it.
- Mud crabs can travel up to 500 metres a night in search of food.
- Mud crabs belong to a family of crabs that have hind legs which are flattened and used as 'paddles' for swimming.

Goose barnacle

- The goose barnacle has flat smooth white plates which fit together like a clam's shell.
- Like other barnacles, this species extends its legs or 'cirri' outside of its flat plates to catch plankton from the flowing water.
- Sea snails are natural predators for the goose barnacle!
- Goose barnacles live in the open ocean and attach to anything with a hard surface – including rubbish, whales and the shells of turtles.

Ornate spiny lobster

- The ornate spiny lobster can grow to 50cm in length, making it one of the largest lobster species.
- They are called 'ornate' after the detailed and colourful markings on their legs and shell.
- You are most likely to find one in shallow coastal waters with sandy, muddy or rock bottoms.
- Ornate spiny lobsters use their front antennae to 'sniff' out prey.

Orange-fingered yabbie

- The most common species of yabbie in Queensland, this yabbie feeds on water weeds and leaf litter.
- Orange-fingered yabbies get their name from the bright orange of their claws.
- They are very good at burrowing! During times of drought this yabbie can burrow deep into the ground to find water.
- This species lives in freshwater environments and is semi-aquatic.



Green mud crab
© Graham Cumming
Courtesy of Dreamfish.com.au

Top tips for a sustainable catch

- When on the hunt for a mud crab, be mindful of the environment. If you damage mangroves with your boat, anchor or crab traps you can destroy crab habitat and reduce your next catch.
- Keep away from mangrove roots – mangroves are important to mud crab populations and the trees can die if their roots are damaged.
- Don't step on crab burrows when trying to catch a muddy.
- Look out for bycatch (the animals you didn't mean to catch!) when fishing with nets to catch prawns.
- Trawling for prawns can damage the soft bottom of the seafloor and destroy habitat for many marine plants and animals. Never repeatedly trawl over the same area.
- Listen to the law. Seagrass meadows are important for the productivity of prawn fisheries and many of these areas are closed to trawling.

Find out more

Australian Fisheries Management Authority
www.afma.gov.au

Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
www.daff.qld.gov.au

Follow the rules

MUD CRABS

Queensland has laws about the size and number of mud crabs you can take home to eat:

- It is illegal to take a female mud crab – put them back!
- A 'legal' mud crab is a male with a shell (carapace) that is a minimum of 15 centimetres across.
- You must have your name and address on both your crab pot and the float.

PRAWNS

- There are no size limits for prawns.
- A possession limit of 10 litres applies to prawns in Queensland, so use a 10 litre bucket to make sure you're within the law!



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