

BLUE SWIMMER or SAND CRAB



“Superb table quality”

ID PHOTOS AS SHOWN ON MUD CRAB PAGE

Subject to personal preference this species could have the edge over the much sought after mud crab.

Although not as powerful as the mud crab, a healthy respect should still be shown in regards to the pain they can inflict with their main claws. They appear to travel through the deeper channels at various times of the year and even though it would seem that the deep channels would be the obvious spot to set your pots or nets experience has shown that the catch rate is inferior in these areas. Also more often than not a passing boat propeller will cut your float rope off resulting in the loss of your pot. Quite obviously they present a hazard to boats when placed in marked channels.

Taken in some of the bay and estuary systems it is best to set your pots or nets (check your state rules) in the deeper water along drop offs which have a clean sandy bottom. Apparently they grow to about 200mm carapace.

Best time of the year to catch sand crabs seems to be in the spring and summer but this is not to say that you should not try for them in the autumn and winter. It seems that the incoming tide from late afternoon to early morning will reap the better harvest. Hoop or lift nets (check your state rules) will achieve the highest strike rate and it is advisable to check them every thirty minutes. Tie your bait to the middle of the centre string at pots bottom.

When removing the crabs from the net, disentangle and remove them from the opposite direction to which the crabs entered the net. Take care not to damage the crabs in the removal process. Pots will also catch their fair share of crabs and have the added advantage of not having to be checked as often. Take a look on a two to three hour basis. Tie the bait to the bottom of the pot in the centre. To help your bait last longer, use a bait saver. As with all crabbing and fishing fresh bait is best. Change bait at first indication of it going off and take old bait away

from the area. Dispose of thoughtfully.

Bait selections will include mullet and bream either whole or as fish frames. A bait proving to be quite popular with crabbers is preserved fish frames. The frames are simply placed in a air tight container in layers with coarse salt being added between each layer. This does not require refrigeration after preparation and has the added advantage of not infecting any cuts or skin abrasions that invariably occur when crabbing.

CLEANING

As per mud crabs.

WHERE TO FIND SAND CRABS

Refer to Saltwater Estuary maps.

SAND CRABS = SC

SIMPLE COOKING

Bring salt water to the boil. Place crab in water and return to the boil. Cook for 7 minutes. Eat hot or cool down in salt water.