

# ROCK LOBSTER

In one form or another cray's are available around a large part of the reefs and coastline of Australia. Up north on Queensland's coral reefs they are known as painted cray's while in the local area around here we have what's called the southern rock lobster.

Both are real good eating although both have different eating habits. The painted cray is basically a vegetarian and isn't fond of entering a baited pot. The good news is that our local variety "the southern rock lobster" loves a feed of flesh and has no qualms about entering a pot to get to a bait.

Rock lobsters are more likely to be caught along rocky headlands and bays, which have a reasonable amount of kelp like growth.

Such areas, which have crevices, caves or submerged rock ledges, make for perfect environments for lobsters. Basically most areas where you would go for a bit of rock fishing could produce a lobbie.

Obviously commonsense should prevail in such areas with a constant eye out for rogue waves and slippery surfaces. For safety reasons we would suggest that you try catching a lobbie from say 2 hours after the top of the tide right through to the bottom of the tide.

On this outgoing tide there should be less chance of a wave swamping you, however take nothing for granted, stay alert for danger at all times.

Rules are in place for the sizes applicable to recreational hoop nets as well as bag & size limits and closed

seasons (applicable in some areas). Avoid a possible fine and keep yourself up to date on the various fishing rules and regulations.

As mentioned earlier, possibly the best place to go for rock lobsters will be where you go rock-fishing.

What you'll be looking for is a reasonably deep channel cutting through the rock. Ideally this channel will have a relatively flat bottom for the net to sit on and have a lot of crevices or submerged rock overhangs along the edges of the channel.

Tie your bait, say a fish head or frame to the bottom of and in the centre of the hoop net. Lower into water at your selected spot and go have a fish for a while.

Check hoop net on a reasonably regular basis. A strong pole with a hook on the end will assist in retrieving the net and to steer it around any obstacles. When retrieving the net, lift it as quick as possible as this animal is capable of blinding speed.

Males can be identified by the reproductive opening at the base of the fifth (last) leg, and females by the reproductive opening at the base of the third leg, the forked claw at the end of the fifth leg, and the forked clasping structures with hairs under the tail for eggs.

When handling, use a glove and grasp by the main antennae's and head. Stay clear of the tail section, the spikes, on the tail will have you in tears.

For simple cooking, bring a deep pot of salt water to the



***"Seafood just doesn't come any better"***

boil. When boiling gently place lobbie in water and bring back to the boil.

Cook for 12 to 15 minutes per kilo thereafter. Check local rules and regulations.

## **WHERE TO CATCH ROCK LOBSTERS**

Try the environments mentioned in this page.