

# MUD CRAB



*“Highly prized delicacy”*

In regards to where to find mud crabs the name says it all. The general rule of thumb is to set your pots in areas with mud bottoms and in close proximity to mangrove trees. For baits, mud crabs have a fondness for mullet, bream, tailor and flathead, either in whole form or as frames or skeletons. It is recommended but not essential to place bait inside a bait saver (available at most bait and tackle shops). This will slow down the feeding process of the crab and keep the bait in your pot longer.

Bait should be changed at the first indication of it going off or at intervals not exceeding 12 hours. Take the old bait away from the vicinity of your pots and dispose of it thoughtfully. Fix baits to the bottom and in the centre of your pot

The safest way to handle a crab is to tip it straight from the pot into a bucket and either cover with ice or refrigerate. This will put the crab to sleep and also reduce the chance of the crab throwing claws during the cooking process.

Pots can be checked after 3 to 4 hour intervals. It would appear that in general the mud crab is at it's best between March and June. Mud crabs hibernate at certain times of the year and basically live off their own bodies. This is possibly the reason why they are not full all year round. During the growing process the crab will shed it's outer shell and replace

it with a larger shell to allow for future growth.

A distinctive feature of the mud crab is it's ability and willingness to throw a claw when in danger and then replace it with a new one over a period of time. Possibly the best to expect will weigh around 2kg. A popular theory suggests that poor results will be had when crabbing in months that have no R in the months spelling. The suggestion is to disregard this theory, as excellent crabs have been taken in the area during these months.

Best time and tide for crabbing will be from late afternoon to early morning on the incoming tide. In dry weather they travel into the far reaches of the river, creek and canal systems and these will be the areas to locate them. After heavy rain they will move back into the main estuary areas and around the creek and river mouths searching for the saltier water.

## MUD CRAB TIPS

With mud crabs it must always be kept in mind that they have extremely powerful claws which can snap out with unsuspecting speed and lock onto the carelessly placed hand or foot.

## WHERE TO CATCH MUD CRABS

Refer to estuary map downloads

**MUD CRAB = MC**

## HOW TO CLEAN MUD CRABS

Ensure crab has been put to sleep, peel back and remove sex identification flap. Pull off outer top shell (carapace) and remove all membrane etc. from top of inner shell. Cut in half. Wash in salt water rinsing off all remaining membrane and stomach contents. Ready to cook or if cooked whole ready to eat.

## COOKING WHOLE MUD CRAB

**Step 1** – Bring salt water to the boil.

**Step 2** – Place crab in boiling water.

**Step 3** – Return to boil and cook for 18 minutes.

**Step 4** – Remove from boiling water. Ready to eat hot or cool down in cold salt water. Clean as above.

## CRAB IDENTIFICATION



MUD or SAND MALE



MUD or SAND FEMALE

### MUD CRAB BAIT:

Frames or Whole Mullet, Bream, Tailor, Flathead, Chicken.