



Mud crab | *Scylla serrata*



A Snapshot of the **Mud Crab Fishery**

Area

Tidal waters of the Northern Territory. Professional fishing is not permitted in Darwin Harbour and a few creeks adjacent to Darwin.

Licences

There are 49 Mud Crab licences and all are fully transferable on a temporary and permanent basis.

Gear

Fishing is by crab pot and each licence allows the holder to use a maximum of 60 pots. Each licence also allows a maximum of 300 metres of bait net with a mesh not larger than 65mm.

Catch

Mud crab is the only species harvested for sale with pots. Mixed species of inshore fish can be harvested by bait net to be used for bait for crab pots only, not for sale.

Product form

Live.

Markets

There is strong demand for mud crabs in Australia and much of the NT product is flown to Sydney and Brisbane markets. There are also small but developing export markets.

Season

While there is no closed season in the Mud Crab fishery, weather conditions usually mean that very little crabbing takes place in January and February.

Management

The fishery is managed on behalf of the Northern Territory by the NT Fisheries Group under a formal management plan.

General

The Mud Crab fishery is a valuable fishery in the NT. Licence values have increased dramatically over the past few years, with a licence now worth more than ten times what it was in 1993.

After capture, crabs are transported live to Darwin, graded, packed and then flown directly to Australian and international markets.

In recent times there has been a trend away from traditional land based camps to vessel based operations and this trend is expected to continue as more remote areas of the coast are worked.

A typical crabbing owner/operator with dinghy, gear and licence has an investment in the order of \$380,000 to \$420,000.

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