

Wanted. Sightings of egg-bearing female mud crabs.

Researchers are asking recreational and commercial fishers in Queensland and New South Wales to report sightings of egg-bearing female mud crabs. The information will be used to map and to better quantify when and where mud crab spawning occurs.

Report sightings of egg-bearing females via email to info@daf.qld.gov.au or by phoning 13 25 23. Reported information should include:

- date
- location (e.g., GPS lat/long or named position)
- approximate water depth
- whether the crab was at the surface or caught in gear (e.g. pot or trawl-caught)
- a photo of the crab (top and underneath, if possible) for species identification
- the colour of the egg mass, which indicates how old the eggs are (i.e., when did the female lay the eggs), as well as how long before the eggs hatch (i.e., where will the eggs be released and using oceanographic information determine where the larvae might end up)
- contact details (if willing), so researchers can follow up for any further information if need be.



Female mud crab sighted offshore - east of Swinbourne Shoal, North Qld (C. Bolton)

Fishers are reminded that it is prohibited under the *Fisheries Act 1994* to possess female mud crabs in Queensland. If you do handle a female mud crab, it must be immediately returned unharmed to the water.



Trawl-caught egg-bearing female mud crab (J. Lee). Based on egg colour - eggs are about 10 days into incubation with about 5 days until hatch.



Pot-caught egg-bearing female mud crab (Port Alma fisher). Based on egg colour – eggs are about 3 days into incubation.

Mapping sightings of egg-bearing female mud crabs is part of a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation co-funded research project with collaborators from Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) Queensland, CQUniversity (CQU) and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) NSW Fisheries. The research aims to provide a better information base to assess and sustainably manage Queensland mud crab fisheries.

For further information on the research project contact Dr Julie Robins at Julie.Robins@daf.qld.gov.au.

State of Queensland, 2020.



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