



Department of Primary Industries
and Regional Development

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

How to clean blue swimmer crabs

Clean it before you eat it

(All crabs must still be landed and transported whole to your home*, unless you plan to eat them immediately.)



*We're working for
Western Australia.*

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How to properly clean a blue swimmer crab prior to freezing, cooking or eating.



1. Anaesthetise the crab by putting on ice for five minutes before the cleaning process.



4. Turn the crab over, put your thumbs in the middle, press down and break into two halves.



7. Clean out all guts (mustard) remnants with running water.



2. Turn the crab over, pry up the belly plate and remove.



5. Pull off the mouth parts.



8. Cleaned blue swimmer crab ready to cook or store at your home*.



3. Put your thumb between the top shell and bottom shell and peel off carapace. Keep the guts in the shell and discard them.



6. Remove the gill filaments from both sides of the crab.



Alexandrium is a serious public health issue. Don't eat mussels caught in the Swan or Canning rivers, and remove the head, guts (mustard) and gills of crabs before freezing, cooking or eating them.

Check out FAQs and a video of how to clean crabs at fish.wa.gov.au/alerts or dbca.wa.gov.au/algal-bloom

*Home means your principal place of residence as per regulation 3 of the *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995*.

How to properly cook a blue swimmer crab

After cleaning, cook crab for about six minutes in boiling water. The cooked crab meat will no longer be translucent.

Make sure you discard the cooking water or marinade.

Know your crabbing rules

All waters, rivers and estuaries from the Swan River to Minninup Beach, south of Bunbury are closed to recreational and commercial crab fishing between 1 September and 30 November.

Blue swimmer crabbing season opens in these areas on 1 December. In the Swan and Canning rivers, the peak crabbing months may coincide with the *Alexandrium* bloom season.

There is a bag limit of five crabs per fisher in the Swan and Canning Rivers. If fishing from a boat, fishers must have a recreational fishing from boat licence. The boat limit is 20, but at least four licenced fishers must be on board to catch the boat limit.

Minimum size limit for blue swimmer crabs is 127mm from the tips of the spikes across the widest part of the carapace.

All undersize crabs or berried females must be returned to the water immediately, before attempting to catch another crab.

For more information, visit fish.wa.gov.au/blueswimmer



HEALTH WARNING

Do not eat mussels and remove the head, guts (mustard) and gills from crabs caught by recreational fishers in the Swan and Canning rivers, before freezing, cooking or eating them.

All crabs must still be landed and transported whole to your home*, unless you plan to eat them immediately.

Toxic algal bloom events of *Alexandrium*, a type of alga, have been detected in the Swan and Canning Rivers at elevated levels and could become an annual occurrence. *Alexandrium* can produce a type of Paralytic Shellfish Toxin (PST) that bioaccumulates in crustacea and mussels. Cooking or freezing whole crabs does not destroy these PSTs.

Consumption of affected crabs or mussels may be dangerous. While there have been no documented cases of PST poisoning caused by *Alexandrium* in WA, in extreme cases it can be fatal. There is no antidote, with treatment being supportive care and artificial respiration. If you become ill after eating crabs or mussels seek medical attention.

For further information:

Alexandrium algal bloom information,
FAQs and cleaning video

fish.wa.gov.au/alerts

Alexandrium algal bloom information
dbca.wa.gov.au/algal-bloom

Important disclaimer

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