



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



*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.



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.

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

How to properly cook a blue swimmer crab

After cleaning (refer to the instructions in this brochure), 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 Bunbury are closed to recreational and commercial crab fishing between 1 September and 30 November.

Blue swimmer crabbing season opens 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 (5) 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.

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/rules



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.

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.

Consumption of affected crabs 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 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/algae-bloom

Algal blooms monitoring
ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Algal-blooms-monitoring

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