



2024 REPORT CARD

MUD CRABS



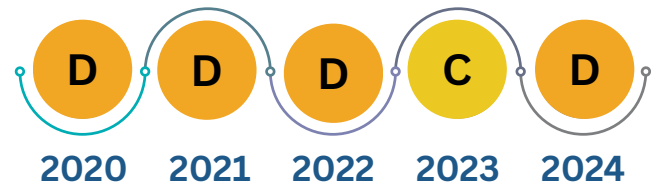
Gladstone Healthy
Harbour Partnership

What are mud crabs?

Mud crabs (*Scylla serrata*) are large, strong-shelled crustaceans found in estuaries, mangroves, and tidal flats. They play an important role in coastal ecosystems by helping to keep the environment clean as they feed on dead plants and animals.

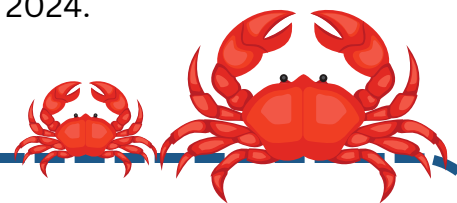
Mud crabs are also a valuable species for commercial and recreational fishing throughout Australia.

All crabs captured as part of this monitoring program are released.



In 2024, mud crabs declined to a Poor (D), although the change in score was very small (0.51 in 2023 to 0.46 in 2024).

Overall, catch rates were higher in 2024, but sex ratio declined. There was a very low incidence of rust lesions in Gladstone Harbour in 2024.



How is it measured?

Mud crabs are monitored in seven zones using catch and release methods with collapsible crab pots. Data is collected twice a year, in the wet and dry seasons. This indicator was developed to establish a long-term mud crab monitoring program.

Three sub-indicators are measured:

- **Abundance** (catch per unit effort) indicates changes in external pressures (like fishing or habitat change) or recruitment levels.
- **Sex ratio** shows the ratio of legal-size male crabs to females of the same size.
- **Prevalence of rust lesions** compares the number of crabs with rust lesions to the total caught at each zone. Rust spots (shell lesions) were first reported in 1994.