

2026 REPORT CARD

MUD CRABS

Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership

What are mud crabs?

Mud crabs (*Scylla serrata*) are large, 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.

2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
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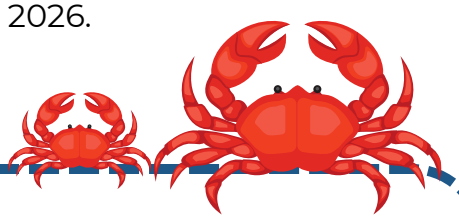
In 2026, mud crabs received a Satisfactory (C) grade for the second consecutive year.

Overall, abundance was higher in 2026, but sex ratio declined. There was a low incidence of rust lesions in Gladstone Harbour in 2026.

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



How is it measured?

Mud crabs are monitored in seven zones via catch and release 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.

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