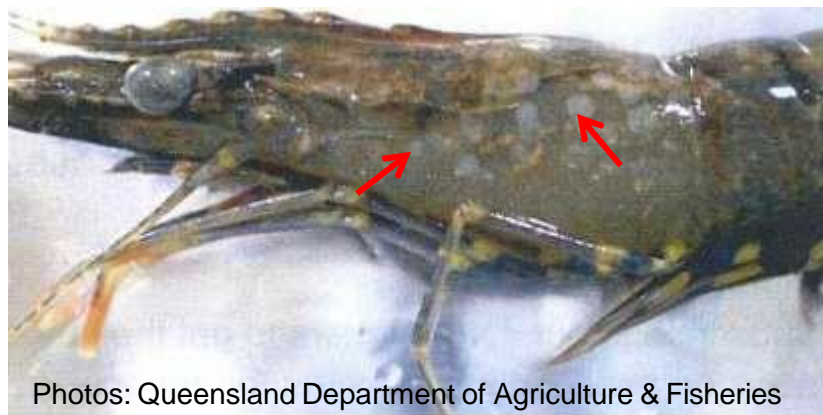


White spot disease in prawns



Photos: Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries



To prevent white spot disease entering Western Australia, fishers are asked:

- ✗ **not** to use seafood meant for human consumption as bait, especially imported or non-local raw prawns
- ✗ **not** to dispose of crustacean waste in or near waterways
- ✓ to clean fishing gear, boats and trailers to help stop spread of infection if it occurs
- ✓ to check their bait prawns/other crustaceans for signs of white spot and immediately **call the FishWatch 24-hour hotline on 1800 815 507** if signs are found.

Key features

- White spot disease is a highly contagious viral infection that affects all decapod crustaceans.
- White spot disease is currently not present in Western Australia, but is known to be present in the wild in a restriction area in South East Queensland. As of March 2023, a restriction area is also in place in New South Wales following detections on prawn farms on the NSW north coast.
- Affected crustaceans do **not** pose a threat to human health or food safety.
- Prawns with white spot disease may have a loose shell with numerous white spots (0.5–2.0mm in diameter) on the inside surface of the shell and a pink to red discolouration.
- Thoroughly cooked products do not present an infection risk as cooking destroys the virus.
Freezing does not destroy the virus.

Impacts

- On prawn farms, this virus can result in 100% mortality within a few days of the infection.
- A widespread outbreak of white spot disease in WA could pose a serious threat to farmed as well as wild-caught crustaceans including prawns, crabs, lobsters and marron.
- There could be impacts on the State's emerging prawn aquaculture industry, and commercial wild-caught fisheries that currently enjoy a white spot disease-free trade status.

See overleaf for information on import restrictions.

Current as of 22 March 2023. Check agric.wa.gov.au for updates

Import restrictions to reduce risk

The import into WA of any crustaceans or polychaete worms must comply with import requirements under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*.

- Because this disease is currently not in WA, restrictions apply to imports into WA of crustaceans of the order Decapoda (including but not limited to lobster, crayfish, prawns, shrimp, crabs, Moreton Bay bugs and yabbies) and polychaete worms of the class Polychaeta.
- The current WA import requirements can be obtained from the [Quarantine WA Import Requirements Search \(https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/iaquarantine\)](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/iaquarantine).
- **As of March 2023, minor enhancements to import restrictions on prawns from New South Wales have been implemented. These precautionary enhanced import restrictions provide some additional controls while further investigations are carried out into the detection of white spot disease at NSW prawn farms.**

More information

- For further information on importing organisms and potential carriers into WA from other Australian States or Territories:
 - visit the [Quarantine WA import restrictions webpage \(https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/importing-western-australia/quarantine-import-restrictions\)](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/importing-western-australia/quarantine-import-restrictions) or
 - contact the Quarantine WA team on 08 9334 1800 or
 - email qwa.import@dpird.wa.gov.au
- For further information about white spot disease in prawns:
 - <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/white-spot-disease>
 - <https://www.outbreak.gov.au/current-responses-to-outbreaks/white-spot-disease>

Important disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

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