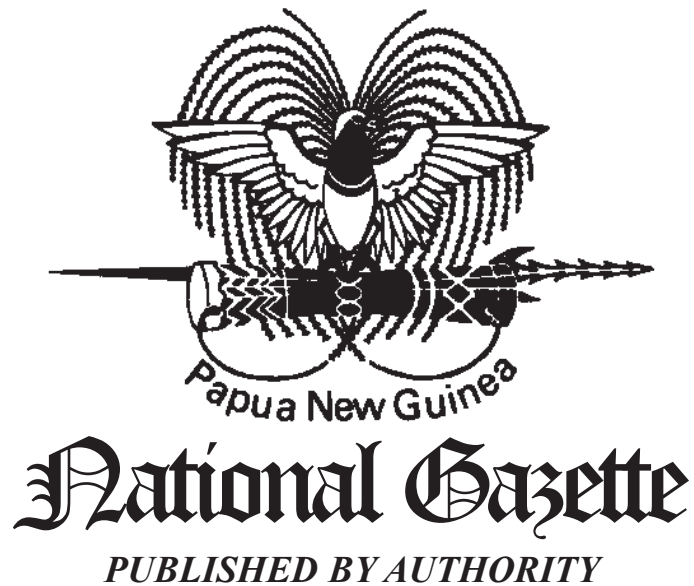




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No. G814]

PORT MORESBY, THURSDAY, 14th AUGUST

[2025



INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Fisheries Management Act 1998, as amended

NATIONAL MUB CRAB FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Fisheries Management Act 1998 as amended

NATIONAL MUD CRAB FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

I, Honourable Jelta Wong, Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources, by virtue of the powers conferred to me by Section 28 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1998*, and all other powers enabling me, hereby give notice of my approval of the National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan. This plan supersedes the previous plan of 2022 (Gazetted on *National Gazette* No G619) and takes effect from the date of notification in the *National Gazette* No: G814.

Dated this 28th of July, 2025.

Hon. Jelta Wong,
Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources.

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THE NATIONAL MUD CRAB FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

BACKGROUND

Resource

Mud crabs, also commonly known as mangrove crabs, are found in mangrove and estuarine habitats throughout the maritime provinces of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Mud crabs belong to the family Portunidae and genus *Scylla* and there are four species found in PNG. These are giant mud crab (*S. serrata*), green mud crab (*S. paramamosain*), orange mud crab (*S. olivacea*) and purple mud crab (*S. tranquebarica*).

Biology and Ecology

The four species of mud crabs found in PNG have similar features and can be difficult to separate into individual species. The reproductive cycle and the size at first sexual maturity are very similar across the four species, with mud crabs maturing between 1.5 to 2 years (with a corresponding carapace width of 9 to 11 cm).

Spawning for mud crabs in PNG appears to be all year round with a peak in spawning from late May to the end of September. Mud crabs have a relatively short larval cycle of two to three weeks in the planktonic stage before they settle after being transported on tides and currents. To spawn, mud crabs are known to migrate offshore as much as 50 kilometres and to depths of 300 meters. Mating takes place when the female's carapace is soft, and within 48 hours following a moult.

The current knowledge on mud crabs' stocks in PNG is mainly based on independent and dependent fisheries data, involving stock assessments, catch monitoring and socio-economic studies. Significant research on mud crabs in PNG was conducted in the 1980s-1990s and more recently from 2017 onwards. However, to make better informed decisions on the sustainable management of the mud crab fishery, there is still a need to conduct further studies on the biology and ecology of each species.

Fishery

There is no industrial harvesting of mud crabs. However, mud crabs have been recorded as by-catch in the Gulf of Papua Prawn fishery. The mud crab fishery in PNG is therefore an artisanal fishery with tens of thousands of fishers collecting mud crabs for subsistence, trade and for sale.

Mud crabs are caught by a variety of methods including by hand, pulled from holes using a forked stick or baited traps. Mud crabs are also caught in gillnet as bycatch. Mud crabs are generally marketed as live animals but can also be frozen or cooked. Mud crabs are kept alive using various storage facilities. They are either packed in wet bags, typically with mangrove leaves or wet copra sacks, or aerated bags for longer periods, or maybe kept in oxygenated containers.

Status of Stocks

The National Fisheries Authority (NFA) has been conducting stock assessment surveys annually since 2017 in the maritime provinces of PNG that are known to harvest or trade mud crabs. The total biomass for mud crab stocks is calculated using a formula that involves recorded mud crab density per hectare, as well as mean mud crab weight for all mud crabs sampled from each hectare and then extrapolated using the known mangrove area for that locality. Stock assessment for 2024-2025 closed season is presented as example in Table 1.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued*

Table 1 Summary of the mud crab stock assessment results for 2024-2025

PROVINCE	MANGROVE AREA (ha)	MEAN CRAB WEIGHT (KG)	TOTAL ESTIMATED POPULATION BIOMASS (TONNES)
Western	117,623	0.488	102
New Ireland	18,933	0.517	245
West New Britain	14,509	0.573	208
Milne Bay	44,606	0.479	534
Central	59,029	0.538	794
Gulf	260,822	0.330	2,154
Oro	16,137	0.752	303
East New Britain	2,788	0.752	52
East sepik	19,872	0.969	321
West Sepik	783	1.044	14
Madang	812	1.503	20
Morobe	3,590	1.716	123
AROB	7,959	0.875	116
Manus	7,404	1.316	108

Export and Marketing

Mud crabs have been exported from PNG since 1992, albeit in small volumes. Since 2015, mud crab export has grown exponentially. Mud crab export peaked in 2019 with 815 tonnes with a decline in the following years, in part due to the restricted movements imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous disruptions of both domestic and international flights. Exports indicated for the 2023-2024 open fishing season and to date has reached an ultimate high record of 935 tonnes being exported. The 2024-2025 open season status shows the progressive projection at 548 tonnes being exported thus far for the season and is expected to increase for the remainder of the fishing season (Figure 1).

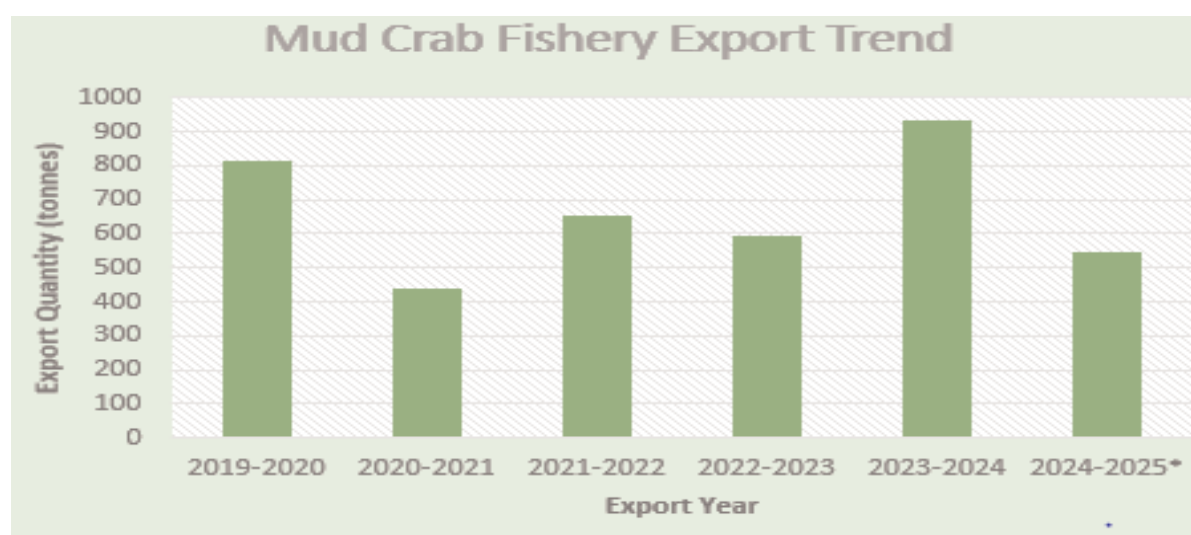


Figure 1 Official NFA mud crab export data update from 2019-2025 *progressive data.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued*

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

There are no known environmental impacts from harvesting mud crabs except for the breaking of mangroves in the removal process. Mud crabs are also an important agent in the cycling of nutrients in estuarine environments. The burrows of mud crabs also introduce oxygen into the sediments, therefore affecting the nutrient cycle in estuarine areas and subsequently the amount of primary production. As scavengers they feed on slow moving animals and sedentary animals such as molluscs, smaller crabs and worms. Mud crabs also feed on plant materials. This feeding behaviour plays a role in the production of particle sizes of the mangrove mud as well as helping to keep the muddy bottom clean.

If mud crabs are being held for fattening or ranching purposes, there is also the risk of introducing diseases, bacteria and other pathogens to new mud crab populations in other mangrove habitats. Subsequently, precautions are required to be taken to ensure that local populations of mud crabs are always protected.

To assist with ensuring mud crab populations are protected, Section 2 for Growing and Harvest Areas under the PNG National Standard for Fish and Fishery Product 2019, states that NFA will have in place a Monitoring Plan for monitoring of environmental contaminants. Subsequently, mud crabs shall not be harvested from areas where the presence of potentially harmful agents such as pathogens, bacteria, bio-toxins and or heavy metals could lead to an unacceptable level of such substance in crab as food.

1. INTERPRETATION

In this Part, unless the contrary intention applies, each word or group of words has the same meaning, if any, as it has in the *Fisheries Management Act* 1998 as amended, except where this differs as provided below:

“**Act**” means the *Fisheries Management Act* 1998, as amended;

“**Authorised Fishery Officer**” means a fisheries officer as gazetted under Section 48 of the Act.

“**Berried**” means a female with large egg masses attached under the abdomen during the period of incubation.

“**Carapace**” means the large non-segmented piece of the hard external shell covering the dorsal and lateral parts of the crab.

“**Closed area**” means a specific area where no harvesting shall take place as specified by this plan or any local management plan established under the framework of this plan, or any areas as designated by resource owners using other traditional or legislative instruments.

“**Closed season**” means a period when no harvesting shall take place as specified by this plan or any local management plan established under the framework of this plan, or any time closures as designated by resource owners using other traditional or legislative instruments.

“**Co-management**” means the process in which NFA will collaborate with resource owners, industry and other relevant stakeholders in sustainably managing the mud crab fishery.

“**Commercial Aquaculture**” means all commercial mariculture or aquaculture operations with an annual production of one tonne or more.

“**Crablets**” juvenile post larval crabs that have yet to attain sexual maturity, sub-adults.

“**Crab Stock**” means a discrete breeding population of individual mud crab species belonging to the genus *Scylla*;

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***1. Interpretation—*continued***

“Crab pot” includes a dilly (net), crab pot and any device designed to act as a trap or that may act as a trap for mud crabs;

“Ecosystem-based Management” is an extension of conventional fisheries management recognizing more explicitly the interdependence between human well-being and ecosystem health and the need to maintain ecosystems productivity for present and future generations;

“Fate” means the form in which the crabs are purchased or stored or exported (e.g. live, frozen, or cooked);

“Fattening” means a post-harvest aquaculture technique where newly moulted, soft-shelled crabs (also known as "water crabs") or underweight crabs are held and reared for a certain period to gain weight and harden their shells, increasing their market value;

“Fishing methods” includes crab pots, baited traps, scoop nets, mangrove hook and mangrove stake used to catch mud crabs;

“Harvesting” means capture, catch or collecting of mud crabs for commercial purposes.

“Hatchery” means a facility where mud crabs are bred and their larvae are reared to a larger size (crablet) before being released into ponds or pens for grow-out;

“Licence” means a licence or other form of authorisation entitling the licensee to buy, store or export mud crab.

“Licensee” means a person or entity holding a mud crab licence, fish processing and storage facility licence, export facility licence and aquaculture facility licence,

“Licence conditions” refers to terms and conditions that a licensed operator shall comply with as per this plan.

“Licence requirements” refers to the requirements for a licensed applicant must meet to be issued a licence under this plan.

“Limit reference point of the exploitable biomass” is the low biomass level that the harvest shall aim to avoid. If the stock is assessed to be below the limit reference point, the risk to the stock is unacceptably high and the stock is defined as ‘overfished’.

“Moulting stage” means the routine casting off of a part of its body (often the outer layer or covering), either at specific times of the year, or at specific points in its life cycle.

“Mud crab” means a crab, or part of a crab of the genus *Scylla* and includes, in relation to a mud crab:

- an egg or larva;
- a dead body or part of a dead body; and
- a shell or exoskeleton or part of a shell or exoskeleton;

“Plan” means the National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan;

“Regulation” means Fisheries Management Regulation 2000 as amended;

“Resource Owner” means an individual, family or clan who have rights of use of mangrove and estuarine areas where mud crabs and other marine resources are harvested.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued*

1. Interpretation—*continued*

“**Size limit**” refers to sizes critical to the population biology of the mud crab species related to its age at first maturity and the reproductive mature size classes;

“**Total Allowable Catch (TAC)**” means the proportion of the harvestable stock that is allowed to be taken out by any one province in any open season.

2. APPLICATION

- a) The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan is cited as “the Management Plan”.
- b) This Management Plan applies to all species belonging to the genus *Scylla* of the family Portunidae.
- c) This Management Plan applies to the mud crab fishery, aquaculture of mud crabs and includes all harvesting and activities associated with the collection, farming, fattening, processing, storage, buying, selling and exporting of mud crabs both as live products, frozen products, cooked products and processed mud crab products.
- d) The Schedules attached to this Management Plan form part of the Management Plan and shall be read together as part of the plan.
- e) This Management Plan is to be interpreted in conjunction with the Act and Regulations.
- f) Words and expressions used in this Management Plan shall have the same meanings as defined in the *aforementioned Act* and Regulation.
- g) Where there is inconsistency between this Management Plan and the Act and the Regulations, the *Fisheries Management Act* (as amended) shall prevail in all instances.
- h) Where there is inconsistency between this Management Plan and any associated Provincial, LLG and community management plans, a hierarchal process of legal standing will apply, e.g., Provincial-level Management Plan will hold precedent over a LLG Management Plan which will hold precedent over a community management plan unless endorsed by the LLG using the Organic Law, or other legislative instruments, with this Management Plan prevailing overall.

3. REVIEW

- a) The Management Plan shall be reviewed by the NFA every two years or at such earlier time as the NFA Managing Director or the National Fisheries Board shall direct.
- b) Subject to prior approval from NFA Managing Director or the National Fisheries Board; any review of the Management Plan shall be made public by the NFA and appropriate consultation shall be conducted with relevant stakeholders involved in the mud crab fishery and marketing of mud crab.
- c) Review of the Management Plan shall include appropriate stakeholder consultations on the issues that affect the effective implementation of the Management Plan and will include any new and updated information on the biology, ecology and fisheries sciences that will inform the Management Plan.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***4. OBJECTIVES**

- a) To sustainably manage the mud crab fishery for the long-term livelihood benefits of the mud crab resource owners.
- b) To maintain all species of mud crab populations at a biologically sustainable level.
- c) To sustain the economic benefit of the mud crab fishery for the benefit of resource owners and industry.

5. MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE**a) Precautionary Approach**

The precautionary approach to fisheries management will be used to guide the implementation and review of the Management Plan and will take into account the latest scientific and other relevant information to refine management actions. Furthermore, in the absence of available data, all management decisions will embrace the precautionary approach for the benefit of the sustainability of the resource and the biological function it plays within the ecosystem.

b) Good Enough

The Good Enough principle will trigger decisions to be made on the management of the mud crab fishery based on the best available scientific and technical data and information at that time. Decisions will be made while working towards further data and information collection to inform management decisions.

c) Ecosystem Approach

The fishery will be managed using the values, principles and guidelines of ecosystem-based management. This means a holistic approach to management of the mud crab fishery, ensuring that the vital natural habitats supporting the different life history stages of the *Scylla* species are managed/protected.

d) Co-Management

Resource Owners, Industry and other relevant stakeholders will be consulted and involved where appropriate in the sustainable management of the mud crab fishery. The Resource Owners will be directly involved in the day-to-day management of harvesting and related activities in areas that the traditional resource owners' control.

6. JOINT MANAGEMENT

- a) The mud crab fishery will be primarily managed jointly by the National Fisheries Authority, respective Maritime Provincial Governments, respective Local Level Governments (LLGs) and resource owners.
- b) The role of the National Fisheries Authority, respective Maritime Provincial Governments, and Maritime LLGs and resources owners will be as follows:
 - i. The National Fisheries Authority will be responsible for formulating and implementing the Management Plan and will provide resources for obtaining, analysing data and determining management measures, which will include the minimum size limits, closed seasons, TACs, the maximum number of exporters and buyers per province, licensing criteria and guidelines for licences, aquaculture and sea ranching guidelines, as well as the establishment of the National Management Advisory Committee (NMAC).

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***6. Joint Management—*continued***

- ii. The Maritime Provincial Governments will be responsible for implementing the Management Plan at their respective levels; this includes the ability to set lower TACs (only at the Provincial level or split amongst LLGs but only as long as it does not exceed the Provincial TAC), higher size limits, longer closed seasons, advising the National Fisheries Authority on licenses, supporting resource owners and communities in their management actions. The province will also have the option to establish Provincial Management Advisory Committees at either or both the Provincial and LLG level to enhance the legal and management framework at those levels for the mud crab fishery. Any new provincial and Local Level Government management strategies, must not conflict with this Management Plan.
- iii. Communities and resource owners will be responsible for implementing the Management Plan at their respective levels, as well as developing management strategies at their level or with the support of the LLG and Provincial governments or other civil society actors. Any management strategies developed by resource owners, must not conflict with this Management Plan.

7. NATIONAL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- a) The NMAC shall be formed and be composed of members with a strong understanding or knowledge about mud crab and the mud crab trade.
- b) The NMAC will provide advice to the NFA Managing Director on management measures as the NFA Managing Director may specify, including TACs, closed seasons, reporting, restrictions, trade, and any other relevant issues that the NFA Managing Director may direct from time to time.
- c) The NFA Managing Director may direct the NMAC to examine a particular issue in the mud crab fishery or mud crab trade or to review all or part of the Management Plan.
- d) Roles and responsibilities of the NMAC includes:
 - i. Review of the Management Plan every two (2) years in consultation with NFA or as required by the NFA Managing Director or the National Fisheries Board.
 - ii. Review and provide comments on the annual Provincial TACs each year before the opening of the season based on the advice from the National Fisheries Authority.
 - iii. Recommend the upper limit on the number of exporters that is allowed for each province for each year.
 - iv. Recommend the upper limit on the number of buyers that can be employed by Provincial exporters for each province for each year.
 - v. Review licensing guidelines and criteria for exporters as recommended by the National Fisheries Authority.
 - vi. Review fishery survey results and advice provided by National Fisheries Authority and Provincial Fisheries.
 - vii. Review any Maritime Provincial Government and Maritime LLG specific management strategies.
 - viii. Review closed seasons, reporting, restrictions, trade, and any other relevant issues that the NFA Managing Director or the National Fisheries Board may request from time to time.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***7. National Management Advisory Committee—*continued***

- ix. Advise on the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management as part of the Management Plan.
 - x. Review guidelines for best practices for mud crab aquaculture and associated activities.
- e) The NMAC will consist of the following persons:
- i. Three (3) National Fisheries Authority representatives (one of whom will be appointed the NMAC Chair). One representative each from Fisheries Management, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance and Legal units of NFA.
 - ii. one (1) reputable fishery scientist outside of NFA.
 - iii. three (3) industry representatives nominated by consensus by the mud crab fishing industry.
 - iv. Provincial fisheries stakeholders involved in the buying and exporting of mud crab for each of the three regions, Momase Region, New Guinea Islands Region and Southern Region.
 - v. one (1) representative from a non-government organization whose objectives include conservation of the marine environment and management of fisheries resources.
- f) The NMAC may invite other stakeholders to attend NMAC meetings on a needs basis to address specific issues.
- g) No more than two (2) members may represent groups or government from the same province.
- i. Elected political office holders are ineligible for membership of the NMAC. Should an NMAC member be elected to political office during their term he or she must resign their membership. Persons who nominate for provincial or national election must stand down.
 - ii. The three representatives from the National Fisheries Authority will serve as permanent members. Other members to the NMAC will serve for three-year terms.
- h) The NFA Managing Director will confirm the appointment of the NMAC members through a letter confirming the membership and the period of membership to the NMAC. Determination of allowances for NMAC members (excluding ex-officio) shall be based on a rate as set by the National Fisheries Authority and approved by the NFA Managing Director.
- i) The NMAC and its members will serve a three (3) year term and may be reappointed. They will operate in accordance with the following procedures and such other procedures and standards as may be set by the NFA Managing Director:
- i. A quorum requires two-thirds (2/3) of all members and must include one National Fisheries Authority representative.
 - ii. The NFA Managing Director shall lay down operational procedures for the NMAC, including place and dates for meeting and the NMAC shall meet twice a year or as needed.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—continued**7. National Management Advisory Committee—continued**

- iii. Prior to taking up membership, representatives will be required to disclose any direct or indirect personal or pecuniary interests in the mud crab fishery or trade. The representative will also be required to disclose any membership in an incorporated company consisting of not less than 25 persons. The nature of his or her interest shall be disclosed immediately to the NMAC. Such a disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the NMAC and submitted to the NFA Managing Director. The NMAC and the NFA Managing Director must be advised of any substantive changes in such interests, or new such interests, during the course of membership. The NFA Managing Director will determine if a change in interests will affect that member's term.
- iv. Where a member who has an interest described in Sub-section 7(i) (iii), has not made a disclosure in accordance with that subsection, his or her vote shall be null and void retrospectively from the time such interest is considered and determined by the NFA Managing Director and the NFA Managing Director shall terminate the appointment of such a member.

8. MANAGEMENT MEASURES**a) Licensing****i. License Types**

Individuals and companies wanting to be involved in buying, storage, processing and exporting of mud crabs will require a Buyers Licence, Storage Facility Licence, Fish Factory Licence and Export Facility Licence. Other licences such as the Aquaculture Facility and Hatchery Licences and other types of licences may be required. All Licences are issued for one year and once a licence has expired, the Licensee has to re-apply for a new licence.

a) Buyers License

A Buyers Licence is required for an individual or business entity who wants to buy mud crabs direct from fishers located in the markets and villages for commercial purposes.

b) Storage Facility Licence

A Storage Facility Licence is required for the storage of mud crabs. A Storage Facility Licence will only be issued if NFA is satisfied that the company has met all licensing conditions and has complied with the conditions of the Management Plan.

c) Export Facility Licence

Companies intending to export mud crabs require an Export Facility Licence as specified under the Regulations. An Export Facility Licence will only be issued to a company that holds a Storage Facility Licence or a Fish Factory Licence.

d) Fish Factory Licence

A company intending to process crab requires a Fish Factory Licence.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***8. Management Measures—*continued*****e) Collector Vessel License****ii. Licence Conditions**

- a) There shall be a limit on the number of Export Licenses and buyers operating in a particular province. The limit on the number of Export Licences will be determined based on the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) allocated for the province.
- b) There shall be a limit on the number of Buyers Licence per exporting company.
- c) All mud crabs collected and purchased from the areas in a particular province will be reported as being from that specific province. Companies who transfer or sell their mud crab products to another company located in another province must apply for an Inter-provincial Transfer from NFA using the Form in Schedule 3 of the Management Plan.
- d) An Inter-provincial Transfer Form must first, be approved by the NFA Managing Director or his/her alternative before any form of trade takes place.
- e) All licensed exporters must provide their airway bill for every export internationally or for every transfer domestically before the next export or transfer is permitted.
- f) All approved export facility licensees must provide a copy of remittance within a timeframe of 10 working days. Failure to do so will result in the company being penalised.
- g) Export Licence holders must show evidence of remittance of export earnings to their PNG Bank account. Failure to do so will result in the application not being considered for the next season.
- h) Once a closure notice has been given for a particular province or nationally in the case of the compulsory seasonal closure, companies must report all holdings of mud crabs or mud crab products to the NFA and the respective Provincial Fisheries Administrations on the Form set out in Schedule 4 of the Management Plan within five working days of the notice
- i) In the event that the company is found to be in breach of this plan or the Act and Regulations, penalties of non-compliance is subjected to the penalty provision.

If the company reaches three penalty charges, their licenses will be terminated.

iii. Licence Eligibility

- a. Licenses to participate in the mud crab trade are reserved for PNG citizens only.
- b. Trade of mud crabs are restricted to licensed operators only.
- c. Licensed export operators who did not participate in trading during the previous season are deemed ineligible for mud crab trading in the upcoming season.
- d. Licence will be recommended based on operator capacity

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***8. Management Measures—*continued*****iv. Licensing Requirements**

- a) Licensed Exporters and their associated Buyers are required to provide all purchasing data every week, using the Form as set out in Schedule 1 in the Management Plan along with copies of their advertised buying and export prices.
- b) Licences may be suspended once an investigation is commenced for an alleged breach of the licence conditions which includes, the Management Plan, Act and Regulations or if the license holder is involved in any other illegal activities.
- c) The National Fisheries Board also has powers to terminate the licences for breach of licence conditions.
- d) Licenses which are terminated are not eligible for re-application for the next fishing season.

v. Buying and Exporting Requirements

- a) Licensed exporters will only export mud crabs with a carapace width of 12 cm and above. The carapace width measurement is shown in Schedule 6 of the Management Plan.
- b) Buying, possession, export and trade of undersized mud crabs less than 12 cm carapace width is prohibited. Any undersized product shall be confiscated, a fine incurred, and or prosecution of the offender.
- c) Export of mud crabs will be consistent with the administrative standards set by NFA and other international trade market standards.
- d) Exporters may sell to another exporter in another province under special circumstances as approved by the NFA Managing Director or his/her delegate. The Exporter shall use the Inter-Provincial Transfer Permit Form in Schedule 2 of the Management Plan.
- e) Each Licensed company intending to export are required to have a storage and export facility in NCD as Port Moresby has the only international export port as well as sub-holding facilities in other provinces where the company's licensed buyers are operating. A Storage Facility Licence or a Fish Factory Licence is required for these facilities.
- f) All licensed exporters must provide all the daily purchase records of the products consigned for export before the export is permitted.
- g) Buying and exporting of mud crabs (processed or live) as samples will be limited to not more than 10 kilograms.

vi. License Considerations

- a) A limited number of licences may be reserved for Resource Owners to allow participation in the mud crab business if they are eligible and able to comply with the requirements of the Management Plan.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***8. Management Measures—*continued*****vi. License Considerations—*continued***

- b) Resource Owners who are prevented either by belief, culture, tradition, or other legitimate means to eat mud crabs may have the option to sell or give permission for the other users to harvest mud crabs from their area.

b) Fishing Season

- i. The mud crab harvesting season will commence annually on the 01st November and will close on the 30th April or when the TAC for each particular province is reached.
- ii. All licensed buyers shall cease buying of mud crab during the closed season between 1st May and 31st October or when the TAC for that province is reached.
- iii. A call for licence applications will be advertised 90 days prior to the 01st of November each year.

The National Fisheries Board may extend or shorten the mud crab harvest season based on relevant scientific information and in line with applicable laws and regulations.

c) Total Allowable Catches (TAC)

- i. Calculation and Allocation of TAC
 - a) The TAC for the mud crab fishery for each province shall be calculated at 50% of the total estimated harvestable stock biomass in metric tonnes based on stock assessments conducted by the National Fisheries Authority for that respective province. TACs will be reviewed when updated stock assessments are conducted.
 - b) The calculated TAC may be divided and apportioned to each Licensed Exporter and Buyer by the National Fisheries Authority for the purpose of exporting.
 - c) The calculated TAC may be divided and apportioned to each sector of the catch in the province such as commercial or artisanal as described in the approved Papua New Guinea Mud Crab Harvest Strategy.
 - d) When a province reaches the allocated TAC, collecting, buying and exporting of mud crabs for that specific province shall cease. A notice informing fishers, Licenced Buyers and Licenced Exporters to cease buying and exporting from that particular province shall be posted in the media prior to the closure date.
 - e) When a province reaches its limit reference point, collecting, buying and exporting of mud crabs for that specific province shall cease. A notice informing fishers, Licenced Buyers and Licenced Exporters to cease buying and exporting from that particular province shall be posted in the media prior to the closure date.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***8. Management Measures—*continued***

ii. TAC Monitoring

- a) NFA shall monitor the TAC in near real time using the daily purchase data Form in Schedule 1 of the Management Plan and through the monitoring of the exports.
- b) Selling of mud crabs to hotels, restaurants and retailers can continue during the export closed season.
- c) Selling of mud crab by licensed buyers to domestic markets shall be reported using the form in Schedule 3 of the Management Plan so the provincial TAC can be apportioned appropriately between commercial and artisanal catches.

9. PROHIBITIONS

- a) The harvesting of mud crabs shall be restricted only to Resource Owners employing allowable harvesting methods as detailed in the definitions of the Management Plan.
- b) Buying of mud crabs for the purpose of exporting and the export of mud crabs is prohibited when a particular provincial TAC has been reached.
- c) The harvesting, buying, exporting and trade of mud crabs less than 12 cm carapace width for all species of mud crab is prohibited.
- d) The harvesting, buying, exporting and trade of mud crabs in moult stage is prohibited. Captured moulting crabs must be immediately returned to where it was caught or nearby pen.
- e) The harvesting, buying, exporting and trade of berried female mud crabs is prohibited. Captured berried female mud crabs must be immediately returned to the body of water or the mud from which they were taken, with as little injury to the mud crab as possible.
- f) Operators are not permitted to buy or export any other crab species apart from the four *Scylla* species
- g) No other harvesting methods are to be used and/or introduced other than those detailed in the definitions of the Management Plan.

10. AQUACULTURE, HATCHERY AND FATTENING

- a) All commercial mud crab aquaculture, hatchery or fattening shall have a valid Aquaculture License.
- b) All commercial mud crab aquaculture, hatchery or fattening shall be managed in accordance with the approved Aquaculture Code of Practice and Management Guidelines or the National Aquaculture Development Strategy.

11. PERSONAL CONSUMPTION

- a) Mud crabs bound for overseas for personal consumption shall be limited to 10 kilogrammes (frozen) and requires authorisation from the NFA Audit Certification Unit using the Certificate for Personal Consumption of Fish and Fishery Products.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—*continued***12. REPORTING**

- a)* In accordance with the Management Plan, Act and Regulations, licensed mud crab buyers shall submit data on mud crabs purchased (i.e., the number of individual mud crabs and their total weight), as well as the area where the mud crabs were caught, the name of fisher(s), date of receipt and price paid to the NFA on a weekly basis. The data on fortnightly employee benefits must be provided at least once, at the opening of the fishing season, then later when there is a change to the employee benefits.
- b)* A Licensed Exporter shall report to NFA each time mud crabs are to be exported detailing the species, fate, weight (in kilogrammes) and value. Failure to submit the required reports set out in the sections above by more than ten days or submitting incorrect or false data is an offence.
- c)* All Licensed Exporters shall be subject to the PNG Standards for Fish and Fish Products.

13. RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENTS

- a.* In support of the objective of this Plan, the NFA shall undertake and collaborate in scientific and economic research and monitoring of the mud crab fishery including with other national, international and regional management and science bodies.
- b.* NFA may visit licensed facilities to collect independent data on crab species, sizes, and other scientific and economic information that are necessary to improve the overall management of the mud crab fishery.

14. LIST OF SCHEDULES

- 1. Schedule 1: Form to record quantity of all crabs being bought daily from fisherman.
- 2. Schedule 2: Application and approval form to sell and transfer crabs from one province to another.
- 3. Schedule 3: Form to declare mud crabs sold to domestic businesses.
- 4. Schedule 4: Declaration form to report all mud crab products held at the close of the fishing season.
- 5. Schedule 5: Standard measurements to check against mud crab size restrictions imposed by this management plan.

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—continued

16. SCHEDULE 2. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FORM TO SELL AND TRANSFER CRABS FROM ONE PROVINCE TO ANOTHER

NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITY

MUD CRAB INTER-PROVINCIAL TRANSFER FORM

Name of Company:..... Export Licence No:.....
 Originating Province:..... Originating Port:..... Port Code:.....
 Receiving Province:..... Receiving Port:..... Port Code:.....
 Receiving Company Name:..... Export Licence Number:.....
 Date Application Lodged:..... Date Received:.....
 Date Products Intended to Move:..... Shipping Method. Ship/Air/Car (Circle)
 Flight Number:.....Shipping Freight Code:.....Car registration number:.....

Reason for Moving Products:

.....

QUANTITY AT PORT OF ORIGIN (KG)	WEIGHT (G)	TOTAL VALUE (KINA)

Name of Applicant:..... Signature of Applicant:.....
 Date:.....
 Name of Inspecting Officer at Port of Origin: Signature:.....
 Date:.....
 Inspecting Fisheries Officers Comment:

Executive Manager Monitoring Control and Surveillance Comment:

.....

Managing Director Approval (Signature): Date:

Inspecting Fisheries Officer at Receiving Port:.....
 Signature:

Comment:

.....

Name of Inspecting Fisheries Officer:..... Signature:.....

The National Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan—continued

19. SCHEDULE 5. STANDARD MEASUREMENTS TO CHECK AGAINST MUD CRAB SIZE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THIS PLAN.

NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITY

SIZE LIMITS

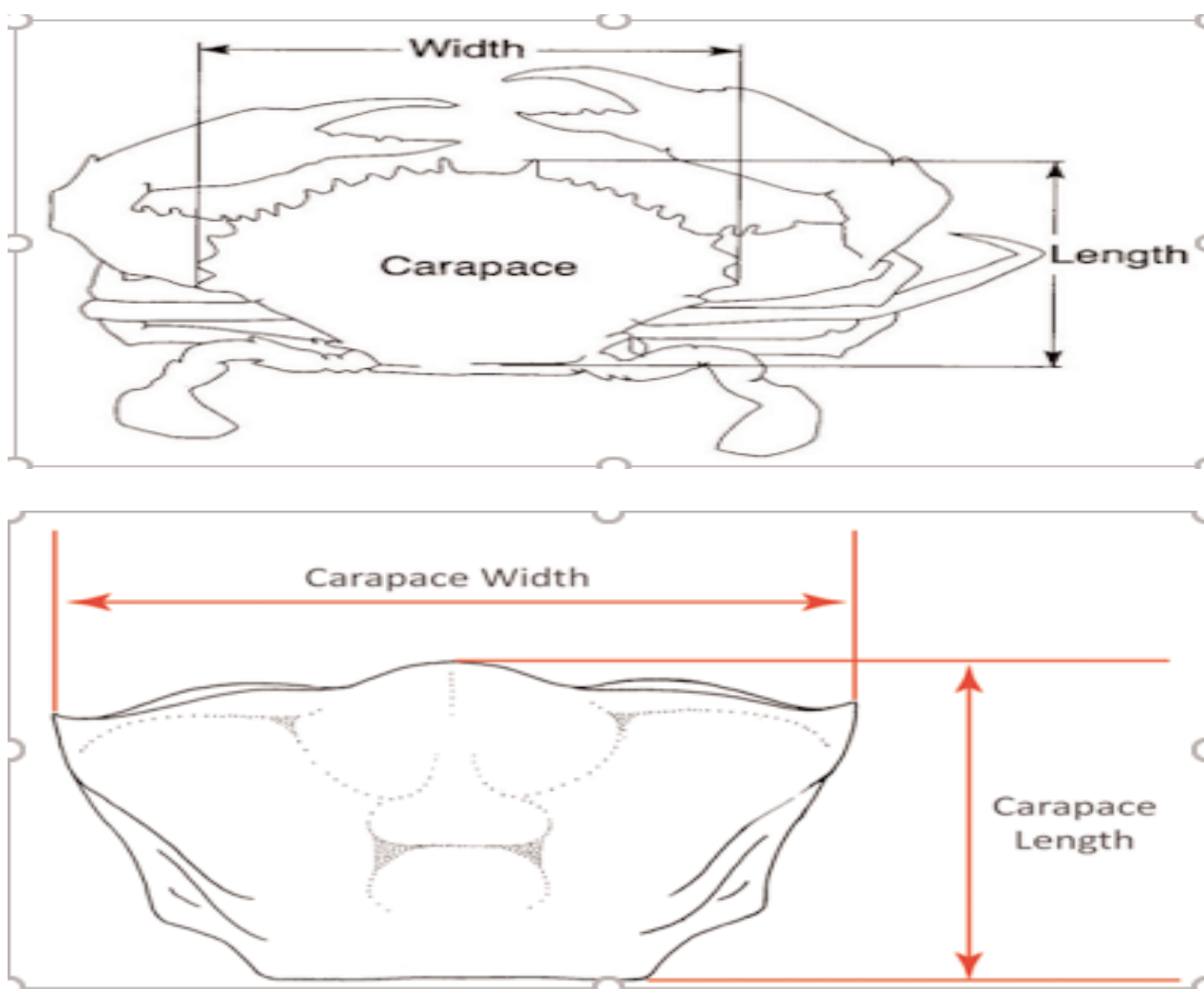


Figure 1. Showing carapace width and carapace length measurement

SPECIES	SIZE LIMITS
<i>Scylla serrata</i>	12cm CW
<i>Scylla olivacea</i>	12cm CW
<i>Scylla paramamosain</i>	12cm CW
<i>Scylla tranquabarica</i>	12cm CW

Dated this 28th of July, 2025.

Hon. J. WONG,
Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources.