

Mud Crab Research Update

*A special edition regarding the 2007 NT
Mud Crab Stock Assessment*

Edition 4: Apr 2007

Introduction

This special edition of the Mud Crab Research Update has been produced to provide information to stakeholders on the process involved in the 2007 NT Mud Crab Fishery Stock Assessment.

Background

On 24 March 2006, the former Minister for Fisheries, the Hon Kon Vatskalis MLA, announced his decision to increase the minimum size limit of commercially harvested mud crabs by 10 mm. Shortly after this announcement, the Minister requested that NT Fisheries implement an independent stock assessment of the Mud Crab Fishery.

NT Fisheries has contracted Drs Tim Ward (Chief Investigator) and Rick McGarvey (Statistician) from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) to conduct the stock assessment.

Tim and Rick have produced an impressive catalogue of scientific papers, fishery reports and stock assessments on species such as: Southern Rock Lobster, King George Whiting, Snapper, Mackerel, Sardines and Garfish.

Stock assessment process

The proposed flow of events for the 2007 NT Mud Crab Fishery Stock Assessment is shown overleaf.

In summary, Tim Ward will visit Darwin in mid April to meet with various stakeholders to gather background information on the NT Mud Crab Fishery. He will then present the preliminary analyses at the Stock Assessment Workshop which will take place in Darwin on Tuesday the 19th of June 2007.

The Stock Assessment Workshop may (subject to funding) be followed by a National Mud Crab Research Strategy Workshop on the 20th of June 2007. Following the workshop, the draft report will be reviewed by Professor Carl Walters from the University of British Columbia, Canada.

Upon the completion of the final report, Tim Ward will present the findings to the Crab MAC (Management Advisory Committee) for consideration. Tim will also present a free public seminar. **If you wish to participate in this process, please contact NT Fisheries (contact details overleaf).**

Mud crab research in the Northern Territory is conducted by NT Fisheries with the assistance of commercial fishers and wholesalers.

Proposed flow of events

Background meetings in Darwin (17-19 April). Dr Tim Ward will visit fishermen, wholesalers, fisheries scientists, resource managers and other stakeholders to gain a greater understanding of the fishery.



Workshop in Darwin (19th June) during which Dr Tim Ward will present preliminary results in an audio-visual presentation. Subsequent discussion will focus on direction of future analyses. All stakeholder groups are invited to participate.



Preliminary report will be sent to Fisheries then forwarded to the NTCFA. Both parties to provide comments if necessary. Comments will be limited to highlighting areas of concern and will be provided to stock assessors within two weeks.



Review will be conducted by Professor Carl Walters (University of British Columbia, Canada). Prof. Walters will circulate comments to stock assessors, Fisheries and the NTCFA. Upon receipt of comments, a telephone discussion will be led by stock assessors.



Draft report will be forwarded to Fisheries and the NTCFA (and others if stock assessors deem affected) with cover letter explaining response to comments provided by Prof. Walters. Comments to stock assessors will be provided within three weeks.



Final report presented by stock assessors in an audio-visual presentation to the Crab Management Advisory Committee (MAC). Hard copies to be circulated at meeting with letter to MAC providing advice on comments not incorporated into the final report.



End meeting to review stock assessment process and discuss research/monitoring recommendations. All stakeholder groups are invited to participate.

How to contact us

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