

Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Mineral Resources
Minister for State Development



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Claw of the law catches up with European green crab sales

The NSW Government has made an emergency declaration to list a species of crab as a noxious fish, after investigations found it was being traded in NSW from interstate, NSW Primary Industries Minister, Ian Macdonald, said today.

“The European green crab, also known as the European shore crab, is a highly invasive species that is known to wreck the environment and engulf native species,” Minister Macdonald said.

“It is now illegal to sell European green crabs live in NSW, the penalty is up to \$11,000.

“The voracious predator feeds on many types of organisms including shellfish and other crabs.

“It has the potential to impact on our aquaculture industry if populations become large, invading out waterways and competing with native species.

“The species has been listed as a Class 1 Noxious fish under Section 209 of the [Fisheries Management Act 1994](#). This declaration prohibits the possession and sale of live European green crabs.”

Minister Macdonald said European green crab is a medium sized crab identifiable with three blunt spines between the eyes (rostrum) and five pointed spines either side of the eyes.

Adult colours range from an olive to dark green, often with yellow or orange patches underneath while juveniles can be a lighter pale sandy colour.

They have a broad triangular shaped shell usually 5 to 6 cm in width but have been known to reach 9cm. They do not have flattened swimming flippers.

Industry and Investment (I&I) NSW Fisheries Compliance Manager, Glenn Tritton, said the declaration means it’s illegal to possess or sell the crab live.

“Anyone found in possession or attempting to sell live European green crabs risk prosecution with penalties ranging from \$11,000 in the case of a corporation and \$5,500 in the case of an individual,” Mr Tritton said.

The European green crab is native to the Atlantic Coast of Europe and northern Africa. However records indicate that this crab was first documented in Australia in 1900 in Port Phillip Bay. It has been found in Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and southern New South Wales.

I&I NSW Aquatic Biosecurity Manager, Jane Frances, said the European green crab can live in a variety of intertidal habitats but is often seen on mudflats, amongst rocks or seagrass in protected marine bays and estuaries.

“I&I NSW is endeavouring to gain a better understanding of the distribution, abundance and potential impacts of the European green crab through ongoing surveillance to trap for this crab throughout several NSW estuaries and coastal lakes,” Ms Frances said.

Report any suspected new sightings to I&I NSW on the 24 hour recorded hotline: 02 4916 3877 or email aquatic.pests@industry.nsw.gov.au

If you see this pest in NSW, please report it immediately

- Note the exact location
- If possible take a photo and/or collect a sample
- Freeze sample in a plastic bag
- Report your sighting

Further reading

[European / Green shore crab \(Carcinus maenas\)](#)
