



# Important information for recreational fishers

## Use of prawns as bait

An outbreak of white spot disease in farmed prawns in South East Queensland is a reminder to people fishing in Australia's waterways **not to use prawns meant for human consumption as bait**.

Prawns purchased from supermarkets and other food outlets could spread the virus.

We need help from Australia's fishing community to ensure that the virus that causes white spot disease is not introduced to waterways through infected prawns. Outbreaks of white spot disease can have devastating impacts on aquaculture businesses and potentially harm popular commercial and recreational fishing areas.

To find out about the restrictions on the use of prawns as bait in your state or territory, check with your Department of Primary Industries or Fisheries.

### Report suspect bait

Check your bait for signs of white spot disease. If you suspect that your bait may be affected, do not use it or dispose of it, and phone the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline from anywhere in Australia on **1800 675 888**. You will be connected to your department of primary industries or fisheries and provided with further advice. There are no penalties for reporting. Early detection and reporting provides us with the best chance of eradicating this serious disease.

You can also help by not disposing of prawn waste (heads and shells) in or near waterways. This waste should be sent to landfill as part of your normal household rubbish.

### Consumer safety

Prawns are safe to eat as white spot disease does not pose a threat to human health or food safety.

## Signs of white spot disease in a prawn



**White spot lesions.**

Photo courtesy of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

### White spot disease

White spot disease is a highly contagious viral disease of crustaceans, including prawns, crabs and lobsters. The disease is caused by white spot syndrome virus which has been detected in some imported uncooked prawns. White spot disease can cause mass mortality in farmed prawns and is easily spread.

Freezing prawns does not kill the virus.

### More information

If you would like more information about white spot disease or national response activities visit [outbreak.gov.au](http://outbreak.gov.au).



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture  
and Water Resources



Department of  
Primary Industries