



March
2017

Prawn imports to Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands suspended

Biosecurity



Decision by Director of Biosecurity

The importation of uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat (including those marinated for human consumption) into Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands is currently suspended. This is due to an unacceptable level of risk of imported uncooked prawns containing white spot syndrome virus.

White spot disease is a highly contagious viral disease of crustaceans, including prawns, crabs and lobsters. It can cause mass mortality in crustaceans and is easily spread, but it does not present a human health risk.

What this means for Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands

Prawns from Australia

In relation to Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, the Director of Biosecurity has agreed to **exempt** the following goods from the suspension:

- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat harvested within Australia (other than the area to which the white spot syndrome virus Movement Control Order¹ relates), and sent to Christmas Island and/or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat harvested from Christmas Island or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, and imported into mainland Australia; or moved between Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island.

Key facts

- White spot disease is a highly contagious viral disease of prawns, crabs and lobsters.
- Bringing uncooked prawns into Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands is currently suspended, due to the risk of white spot disease infecting the islands' crustaceans.
- Exemptions to the suspension may apply.
- All biosecurity conditions must be complied with, otherwise goods will be forfeited and destroyed.
- For further information, please contact ExternalTerritories@agriculture.gov.au

¹ Movement Control Order Notice (Logan and Albert Rivers) – White Spot Syndrome Virus accessed from agriculture.gov.au

Uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat imported into Christmas Island and/or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands from Australia must now be accompanied by documentation from the manufacturer or packaging information (such as labelling) outlining the source of the prawns (for example wild caught in Western Australia). Uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat that are imported into Christmas Island and/or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands from Australia without sufficient source evidence, or imported uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat that are sourced from white spot disease infected areas, will need to be either exported back to their port of origin or destroyed.

Prawns from overseas

The department is reviewing products that have been included in the suspension to determine whether they meet Australia's appropriate level of protection for white spot syndrome virus. The review has identified that the importation of uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat from all countries, except New Caledonia, into Christmas Island and/or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands presents an unacceptable level of biosecurity risk.

The following prawn products are also **exempt** from the suspension:

- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat processed into dumplings, spring rolls, samosas, other dim sum-type products and other similar products
- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat which have been breaded, crumbed or battered
- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat sourced from Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), without first having been brought or imported into any other country
- imported bait for aquaculture use, pet fish food and aquaculture feeds which contain uncooked prawns and prawn meat
- dried prawns and shelf-stable prawn-based food products
- uncooked Australian wild-caught prawns exported to Thailand for processing in a facility approved by Thailand's Department of Fisheries, and re-exported to Australian Territory
- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat as transhipped goods for outgoing passenger vessels engaged in international travels
- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat as laboratory or food samples for analysis

Exports

Imports of uncooked prawns into Australia from Christmas Island or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands that were not harvested from Australia's EEZ are currently suspended.

For further information, please contact ExternalTerritories@agriculture.gov.au

Please note: the department would like to remind recreational fishers that prawns purchased from the supermarket for human consumption should never be used as bait or berley. Unused prawns, or parts of prawns, should never be disposed of into waterways.



Contact 1800 900 090
(free call)



For more information
agriculture.gov.au
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