



# Fish Name Fact File No 6

## Naming of Prawns and Shrimp

The FRDC Fish Names Committee(FNC) is responsible for the maintenance and ongoing development of the Australian Fish Names Standard (AS 5300). The FNC makes decisions on the Standard Fish Names to be used for all species traded in Australia. Decisions made by the FNC are based on the fish name protocols that give guidance to names, and stakeholder feedback.

Most FNC decisions are straightforward and/or non-contentious but, in some cases, the background to the name selection and the FNC reasons need to be fully articulated.

This is one of a series of fact sheets about fish species that the FNC has considered and that need further explanation. The fact sheet provides the background as to how the name was selected and why it was approved.

### Background to FNC Decision

There has often been confusion in Australia about the naming of prawns and shrimp and why the names were used. This Fact Sheet gives the history and the reason for the decisions.

The distinction between shrimps and prawns from a consumer standpoint is a very grey area and differs from country to country. In fact, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) uses both "prawn" and "shrimp" at random interchangeably across the genera.

In Australia and Europe, large species (of both groups) are called prawns, and small species are called shrimps. In the USA, large and small species are called shrimps, and the name prawns is rarely used.

The same species that is sold as a prawn in Australia will be sold as a shrimp in the USA. If you remember the Paul Hogan tourism ads for North America using the catch phrase "throw another shrimp on the barbie". He was referring to what we call prawns which did cause some confusion in Australia at the time.

In Australia, taxonomically we refer to the suborder Dendrobranchiata as prawns - they have 3 pairs of legs with claws, 2nd abdominal segment overlaps the 3rd segment. We refer to the infraorder Caridea as shrimps - they have 2 pairs of legs with claws, 2nd abdominal segment overlaps both 1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> segments. (Note that there are other differences)

Farmed species, both from domestic and imported sources are also Dendrobranchiata, thus called prawns.

The major commercial shallow-shelf waters species that we are accustomed to in Australia are all in the Dendrobranchiata, however the commercial deep-water species and

freshwater species here are all in the Caridea. To add to the confusion, a few small Dendrobranchiata species caught as bycatch are sometimes processed and sold as shrimp!

In the most recent publication “*Southern Seafood*”, Donald Tuma notes that the names are used interchangeably by various countries but also states that ‘Shrimp’ is a diminutive term often applied to small decapod crustaceans of either marine or freshwater origin.

### Relevant species in the Australian Fish Names Standard

Order	Decapoda	
Suborder	Dendrobranchiata    Prawns	Pleocyemata    shrimps
Taxonomic comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have 3 pairs of legs with claws</li> <li>• 2nd abdominal segment only overlaps the 3rd segment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have 2 pairs of legs with claws</li> <li>• 2nd abdominal segment overlaps both 1st &amp; 3rd segments</li> </ul>
Infraorder	Penaeoidea	Caridea
Family	Penaeidae	
Genus in AFNS	Acetes                      Melicertus Aristaeomorpha        Metapenaeus Aristaeopsis            Parapenaeus Aristeus                    Penaeus Haliporoides            Trachysalambria Macrobrachium	Heterocarpus

### Further Discussion and Clarification

The majority of commercial species that we see in Australia are Dendrobranchiata prawns. As such, they are the most prevalent in the Australian Fish Names Standard (AFNS). There, however, a couple of species from the Caridea infraorder.

### Status of the Australian Fish Names Standard

Usage of the names included in the Australian Fish Names Standard is strongly encouraged but not currently mandatory.

Usage of the Australian Fish Names Standard is listed as an Advisory Note in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 2.2.3 - Fish and Fish Products (see <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2011C00569>).

### Status of the Australian Fish Names Standard – Australian Fish for Export

Usage of the names included in the Australian Fish Names Standard is a legislative requirement.

Trade descriptions applied to fish and fish products for export as food from Australia must include the Australian Fish Name and/or scientific name detailed in the Australian Fish Names Standard

Usage of the Australian Fish Names Standard is detailed in the Export Control (Fish and Fish Products) Orders – 2005 – Schedule 7 – Trade Description (see <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2011C00766>)

## **Additional Reading**

- 1) FRDC; Search the Australian Fish Names Database, (2020); [www.fishnames.com.au](http://www.fishnames.com.au)
- 2) CSIRO Oceans and Atmosphere; CAAB Codes for Australian Aquatic Biota; ; (2020); <http://www.marine.csiro.au/oldcaab/>
- 3) Tuma, Don. (2019), Southern Seafood: A Guide to the Shellfish of Oceania / Donald Tuma Hardie Grant Media [Richmond, Victoria]
- 4) Atlas of Living Australia; (Accessed April 2020); DENDROBRANCHIATA Spence Bate, 1888; <https://bie.ala.org.au/species/urn:lsid:biodiversity.org.au:afd.taxon:c120c197-402c-4570-90ac-a39270c5b016>
- 5) Food, England (2010) No 420; The Fish Labelling (England) Regulations 2010 ; available from [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/420/pdfs/uksi\\_20100420\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/420/pdfs/uksi_20100420_en.pdf)
- 6) Seasoned Advice (Accessed April 2020) What is the difference between a prawn and a shrimp; <https://cooking.stackexchange.com/questions/45226/what-is-the-difference-between-a-prawn-and-a-shrimp>