

Spot Prawns by Trap

SPECIES

Spot Prawn (*Pandalus platyceros*)

OTHER NAMES

Spot shrimp

ABOUT

Spot prawns (family *Pandalidae*) are the largest of the 7 commercial species of marine shrimp found in British Columbia (BC). The prawn's body colour is usually reddish brown or tan with white horizontal bars on the carapace (shell) and distinctive white spots on the first and fifth abdominal segments. They are found on the ocean floor at depths of 55-90 metres (180-295 feet). Large females can exceed 23 cm (9 inches) in total length. The minimum (shell) size for harvest is 3.3 cm (1 1/3 inch) long measured from the back of the eye to the back of the shell on the mid dorsal line. This is approximately equivalent to a 7 cm (3 inches) overall body length. In the commercial fishery, all undersized prawns and berried females must be released immediately. Approximately 2,000 tonnes of spot prawn is harvested annually in BC.



Spot prawns are known for their sweet, delicate flavour and firm texture.

STOCK STATUS

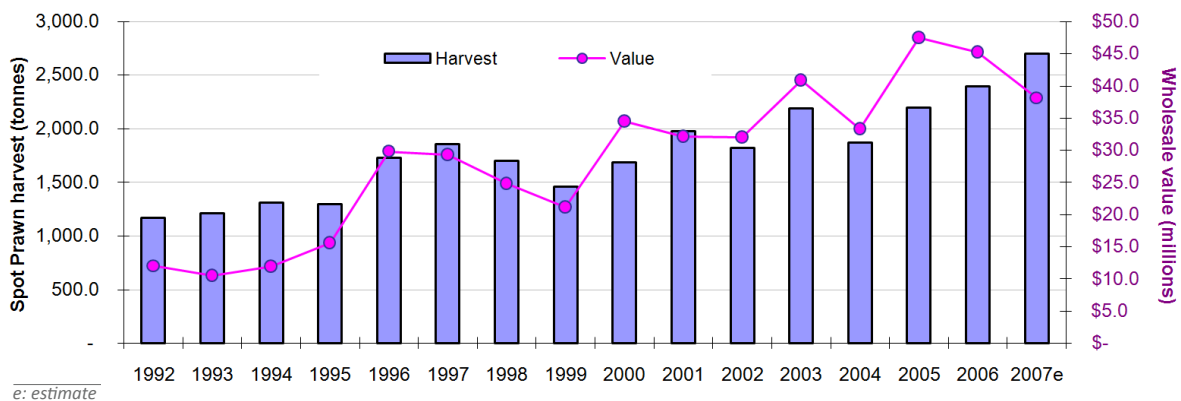
Low abundance of winter breeding stocks is indicated in various areas from year to year. Overall, stocks are healthy and there is no indication of concern at this time (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

MANAGEMENT

BC's prawn fishery is managed federally by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) This is a fully competitive commercial trap fishery with no pre-season estimate of total allowable catch (TAC) and no individual fishing quotas. The fishery is managed by size (size limits), trap limits, and in-season assessment of breeding stock strength. Average season is May and June (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

PRODUCT VALUE

Harvests and wholesale values fluctuate: 1,700 tonnes at \$40.2 million in 2000; 2,700 tonnes at \$38.1 million in 2007 (*BC Seafood Industry Year in Review*).



LIFE HISTORY

Prawns live for 4 years. They start their life as males and mature at 1 year of age. Prawns exhibit protandric hermaphroditism - they function as males for 2 seasons and then transform into females. Breeding occurs in autumn. The females carry bright orange fertilized eggs under their tails on small abdominal appendages called pleopods or swimmerettes, for 2 to 3 months from October to April.

Prawns are opportunistic bottom feeders on marine worms, other prawns and shrimp, fish and protein detritus. Predators include other prawns, octopus, rockfish, and other bottom fish.

PRODUCTS

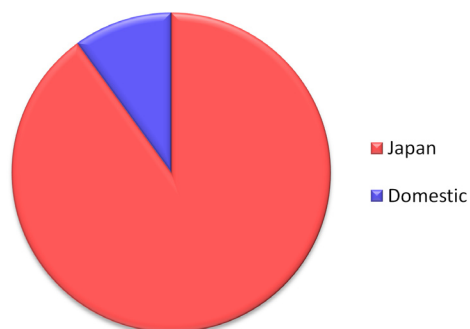
Prawns are available live, fresh, fresh landed then frozen: frozen at plant (FAP), and frozen-at-sea (FAS). Fresh and frozen prawns are available whole or tailed (head and thorax removed).

PRODUCT MARKET

About 90% of the commercial catch is exported to Japan and the remainder is sold in BC.

MARKET TREND

Prices declined significantly in 2007 due to increased competition in the Japanese marketplace from Argentinean and Russian products; fluctuating exchange rates; and changing Japanese consumer preferences.

**LINKS**

DFO - Fisheries Management Plans: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/fishmgmt_e.htm

BC Seafood Industry Year in Review: www.env.gov.bc.ca/omfd/reports/index.html

BCSeafood.ca: www.bcseafood.ca/index.php

Fish and Seafood Online: <http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/sea-mer/index-eng.htm>