

## **Biological Info: Giant Tiger Prawn (*Penaeus monodon*)**

Penaid Shrimp Family (Penaeidae)

Native to Southeast Asia, the Philippines and Australia, the tiger prawn was introduced into the United States for mariculture.

Tiger prawns inhabit a wide range of salinities from 3 to 35 ppt (parts per thousand) with juveniles inhabiting lower salinities than adults. They have a rather narrow preferred temperature range of 77F to 90F.

Very distinct from native white and brown shrimp, tiger prawns have black and white banding on their tails. They reach about 13 inches and 10 ounces, and females are generally larger than males. Tiger prawns grow up in coastal estuaries, lagoons and mangrove habitats. They are primarily nocturnal species burrowing into muddy or sandy bottoms. They are generally predatory as opposed to our native shrimp, which are more scavengers or detritus feeders.



### **Expanded range:**

While no current mariculture facilities exist in the United States, tiger prawns were probably introduced through an accidental escape in South Carolina in 1988. However, between 1988 and 2006, only one was collected. Since then, additional prawns may have escaped during hurricanes from other U.S. facilities, such as in Alabama during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and Caribbean mariculture facilities. Since 2006, reports have increased to more than 170 - from North Carolina to Louisiana. In 2011, reports greatly increased, however, still with only a few individuals being reported each time.

In Louisiana, tiger prawns have been sighted from the deep water pass off Lake Borgne to the edges of Vermillion Bay. Most frequently they are caught by shrimpers. They were first documented in 2007 in Vermillion Bay with one sighting. No more were documented until 2009 when five occurrences were reported. There were seven occurrences in 2010 and 32 new occurrences in the first nine months of 2011. Tiger prawns have also been occurring in new drainage areas of the southeast beyond Louisiana in 2011.

For a current map of giant tiger prawns, see the USGS Nonindigenous Aquatic Species site:  
<http://nas2.er.usgs.gov/viewer/omap.aspx?SpeciesID=1209>

### **Ecology and Impacts**

Tiger prawns are susceptible to a variety of bacterial, fungal and viral infections, including white spot. They can then spread these diseases to native shrimp and crawfish.

### **What to do if you catch a tiger prawn**

Report them! If you come across these shrimp in local waterways, you are encouraged to save the specimen (ice or refrigerate), record the location and contact an LDWF biologist at: (225) 765-2949. You can also report them to USGS at <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/sightingreport.aspx>, or call 1-800-STOP-ANS.

Additional Information:

USGS NAS: [nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/factsheet.aspx?SpeciesID=1209](http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/factsheet.aspx?SpeciesID=1209)

FAO: [http://www.fao.org/fishery/culturedspecies/Penaeus\\_monodon/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/culturedspecies/Penaeus_monodon/en)

LDWF: <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/tiger-prawn>