

# Crab 101

(Blue & Red Swimming,  
Blue Swimmer Crab)

January 2022



# Swimming / Swimmer Crab



Blue Swimming Crab  
*Portunus pelagicus*

Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam,  
India, Tunisia



Blue Swimmer Crab  
*Callinectes sapidus*

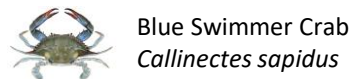
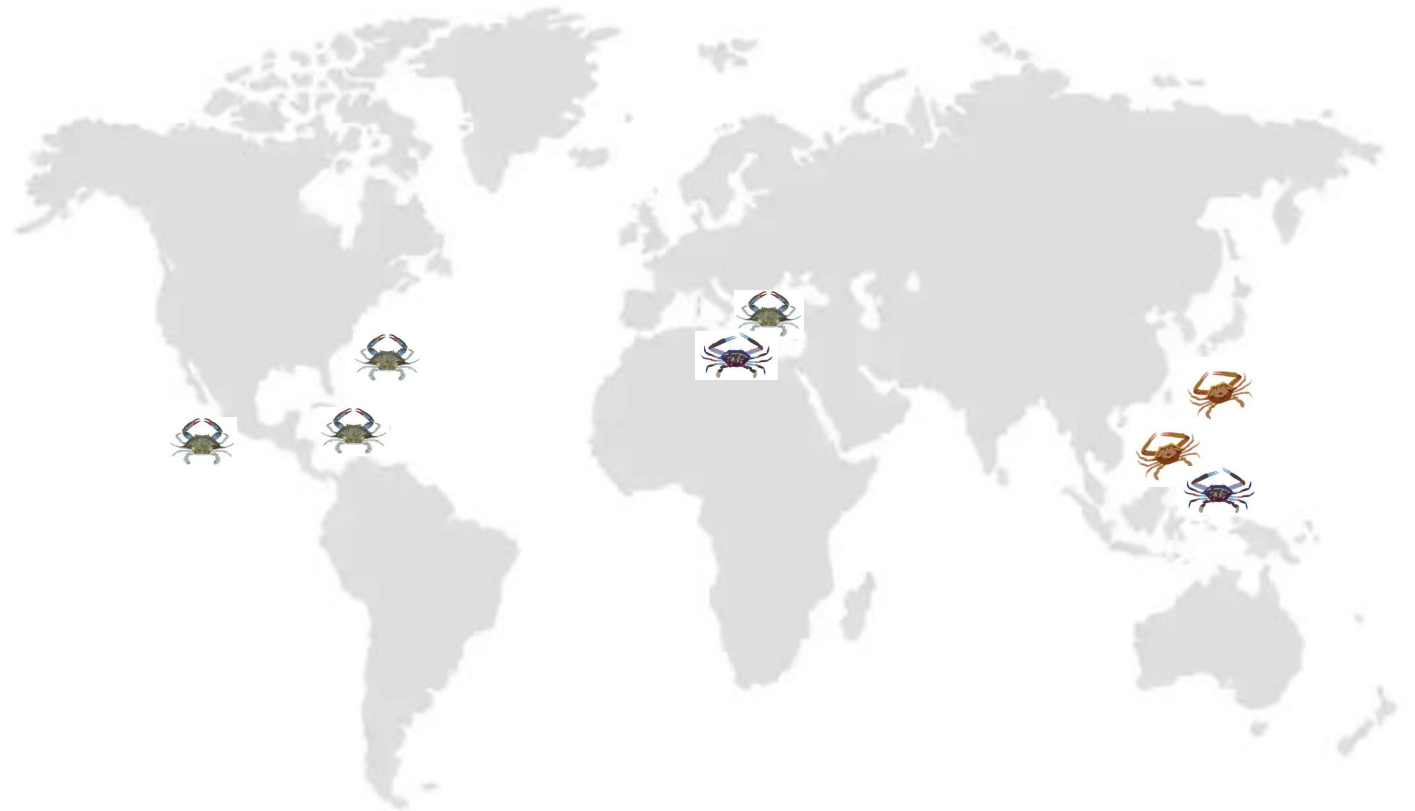
Venezuela, Mexico, USA, Nicaragua



Red Swimming Crab  
*Portunus haanii*

China, Vietnam

# The Primary Fisheries



Blue Swimmer Crab  
*Callinectes sapidus*

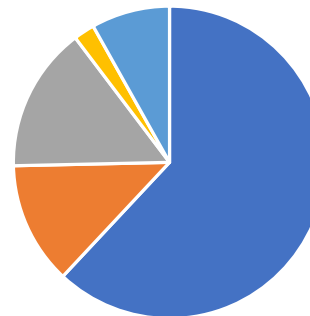


Blue Swimming Crab  
*Portunus pelagicus*



Red Swimming Crab  
*Portunus haanii*

Blue Swimming / Swimmer Crabmeat Imports



■ Indonesia ■ Philippines ■ Venezuela ■ Mexico ■ Other

Red Swimming Crab Imports



■ China ■ Vietnam

# Blue Swimming Crab *Portunus pelagicus*



Blue Swimming crabs (*Portunus pelagicus*) are caught throughout Southeast Asia, but primarily within Indonesia. This year-round fishery produces roughly 50-60% of the crabmeat imported annually into the US market.

Blue Swimming crab is prized for its mild to sweet flavor and delicate texture. When properly processed and pasteurized, crabmeat will have a uniform white color for all grades but claw, which will have a natural brownish tint.



**INDONESIA** - Primarily pasteurized, year-round availability, but peak production is between January-April.



**PHILIPPINES** – Primarily pasteurized, year-round availability, but peak production is between July-October.



# Blue Swimmer Crab *Callinectes sapidus*



Blue Swimmer crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*) are harvested and processed along the US Eastern seaboard, Gulf of Mexico and Central and South America. Venezuela is the largest region for *sapidus*, but Mexico has built a large fishery for its cousin, *Callinectes bellicosus*.

With a slightly sweeter flavor profile than *pelagicus*, *sapidus* is prized by discriminating chefs for its flavor.



**VENEZUELA** – a seasonal fishery with the bulk of the crab processing done in the Maracaibo region. Peak season is April-July.



**UNITED STATES** – seasonal fishery ranging from Maryland, Virginia and through the Gulf Coast. April-August is peak harvest season.



**NICARAGUA** – a smaller seasonal fishery with reputation for superior quality blue crabmeat. Peak production from May-November.





# Red Swimming Crab *Portunus haanii*



Red Swimming Crab (*Portunus haanii*) is harvested and processed in China and Vietnam. China represents roughly 70-80% of annual imports into USA. Vietnam is smaller, but has a reputation for higher quality and consistency.

For price buyers, red crab offers better value, typically cheaper than *pelagicus*. However, its texture is softer, and its flavor can be more pronounced than Blue. Unlike *pelagicus*, *haanii* is processed from dead crabs, which can impact texture.



**CHINA** – large seasonal fishery with peak season Sep-Dec. All processing stops for Conservation between May-Aug.



**VIETNAM** – smaller, seasonal fishery producing higher quality *haanii*. Peak season runs June through November.





## Blue Swimming Crab *Portunus pelagicus*

Blue Crabs are typically caught daily, just off-shore by local fishermen using small artisanal vessels. Their live catch is sold on the beach.



## Red Swimming Crab *Portunus haanii*

Red Crabs are caught further off-shore by commercial vessels. Trips last days and crabs are held on ice prior to return.





Once landed, crabs are steam cooked in pots and then chilled for picking.



Crabs are hand picked to specific specifications for all desired grades.





The process entails quality checks for shells and cartilage to ensure specifications are met.

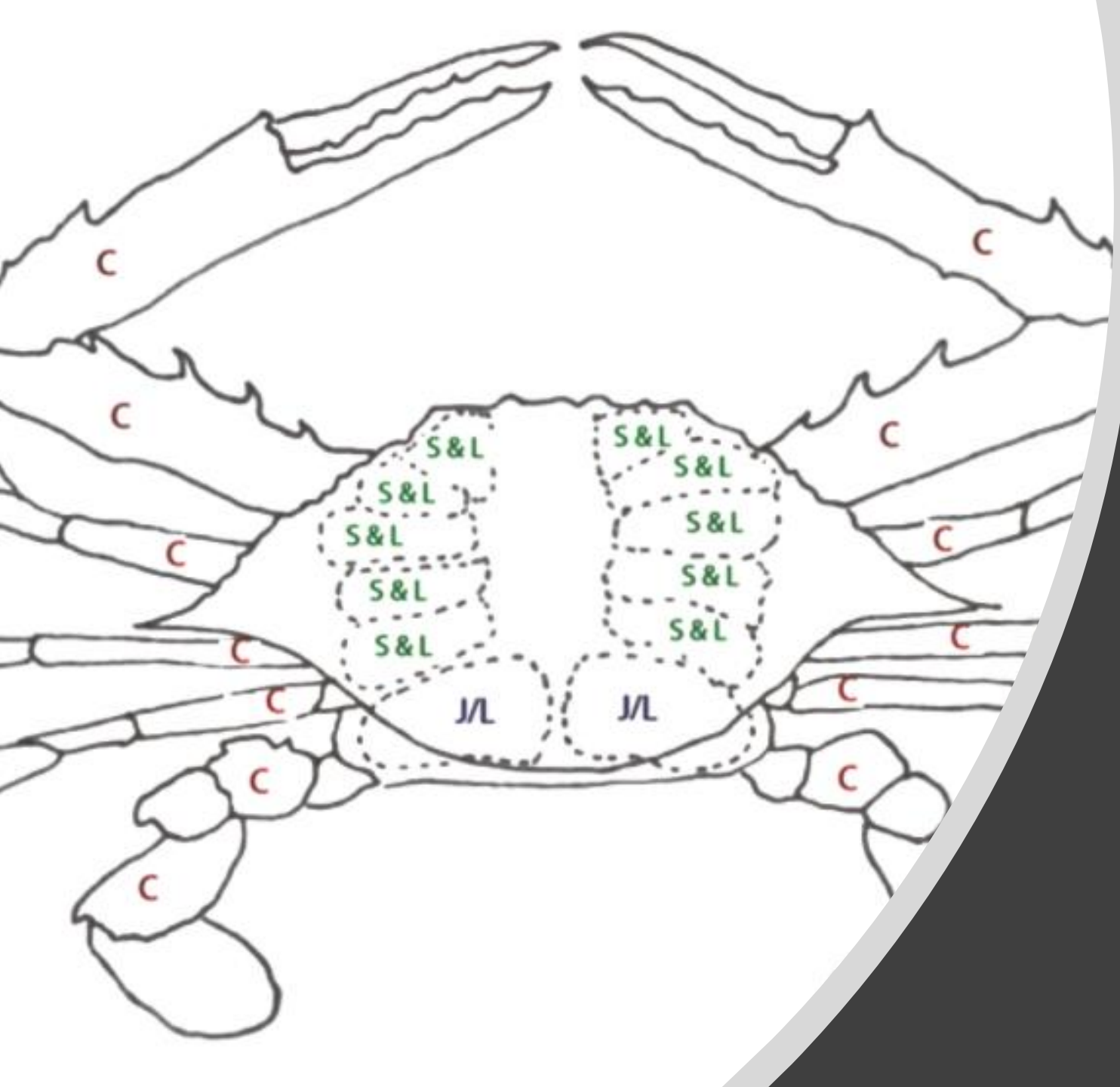


Meat is then packed to net weight by grade in cans for pasteurization.

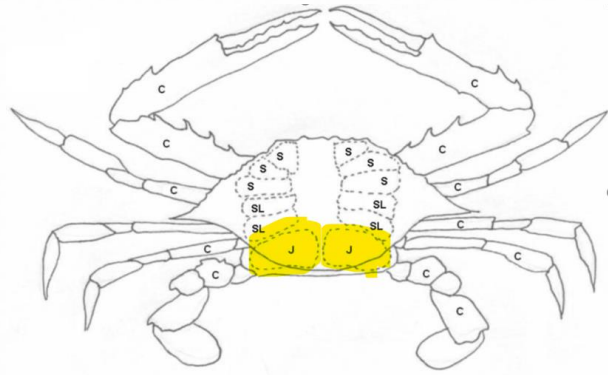




Cans are hermetically sealed and pasteurized through a thermal process. Cans are then chilled and refrigerated for distribution.

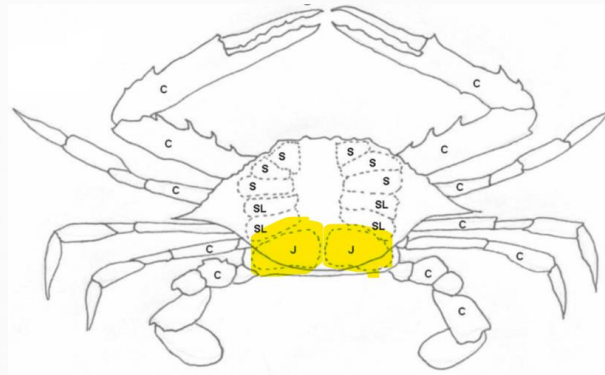


# Meat Grades



# Colossal

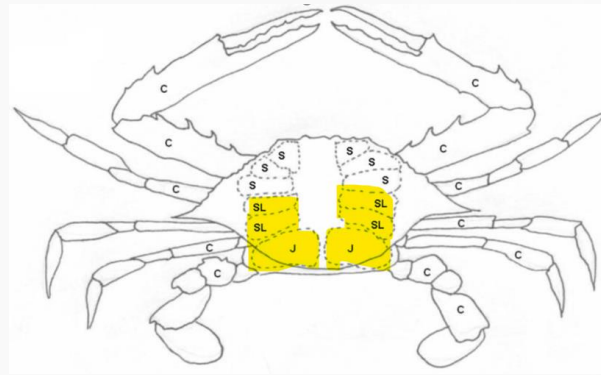
The largest whole muscle pieces taken from the largest crabs. Meat comes from the swimmer fin cavity.



# Jumbo Lump

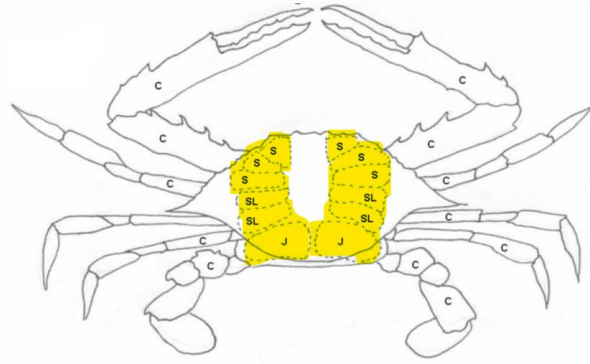
Large whole muscle pieces taken from the swimmer fin cavity.





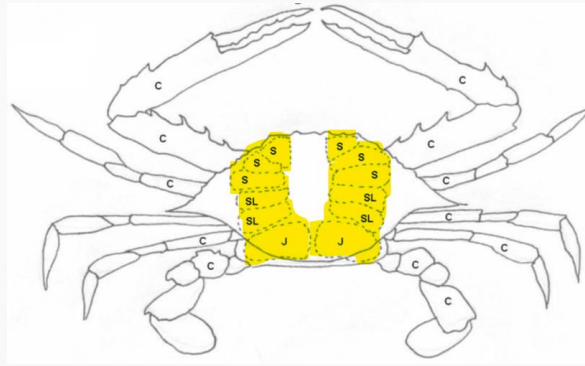
# Super Lump

A combination blend of whole Jumbo Lump, broken Jumbo Lump and large body flake pieces. Ratios vary by brand, impacting the quality and price.



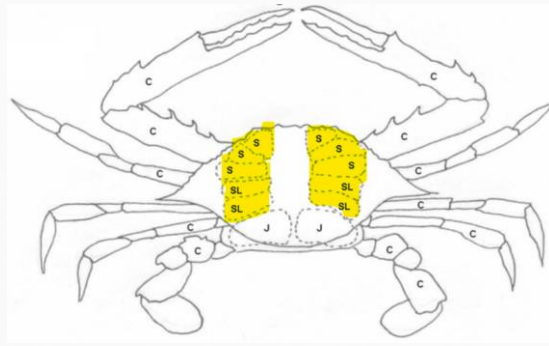
# Lump

A combination blend of Special meat and Super Lump. Ratios vary by packer, impacting the quality and the price.



# Backfin

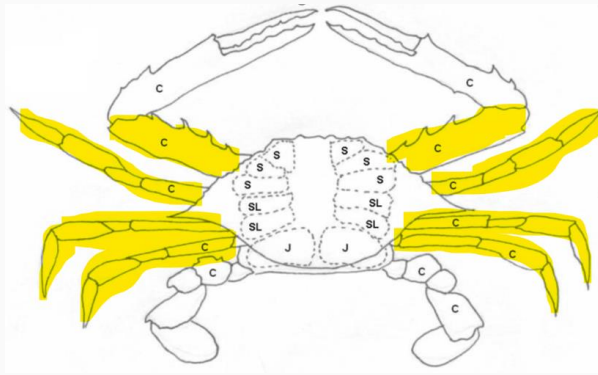
A combination blend of Special meat and Super Lump. Backfin has a higher percentage of Special versus Lump. Ratios vary by packer, impacting the quality and the price.



# Special

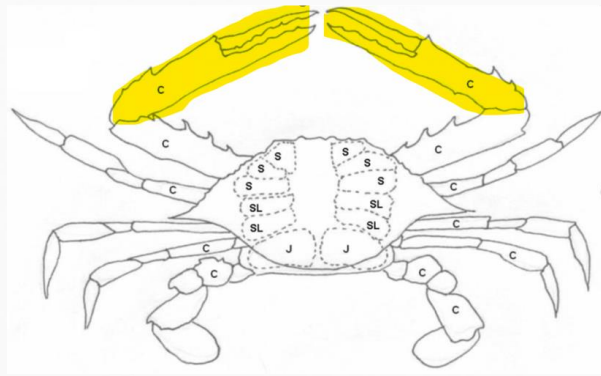
Small flakes of meat picked from the body of the crab.





# Claw

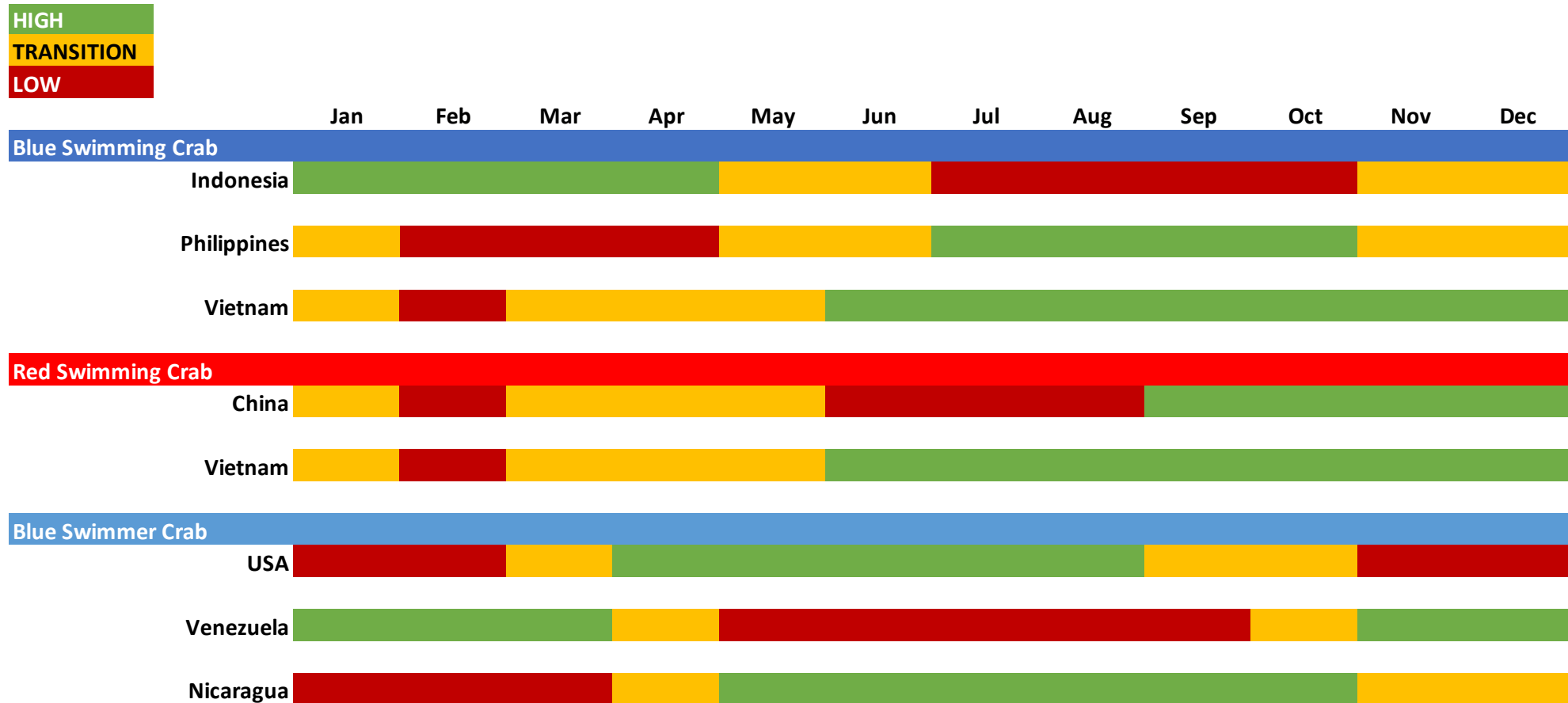
Meat picked from the legs and claws. Includes both small flakes and larger merus pieces. Color is darker, but flavor is more pronounced.



# Cocktail Claws

Whole cap-off Claws, hand scored and cut with pincer shell retained. Skilled, time-consuming process limits their overall production and availability.

# Seasonality



Note: Due to proximity to equator, Indonesian seasonality can vary substantially during strong El Nino and La Nina conditions.





Crab is ranked #9 in per capita seafood consumption, with Americans eating roughly ½ lb. annually.

Crab is predominantly sold at Foodservice. 2019 data suggests 36% of all restaurant operators menu crab. *(Technomic, 2020)*

Consumers love crab, and crab cake appetizers rank #1 for 25% of Americans. *(Datassentials, 2017)*

Menu Item	% Indicating Favorite
Fried Shrimp	44%
<b>Crab Cake</b>	<b>25%</b>
Crab Rangor	18%
Crab Dip	15%



# Heron Point Seafood

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[www.heronpointseafood.com](http://www.heronpointseafood.com)

Heron Point Seafood is a top 5 importer and processor of blue and red swimming crab.

We offer all grades of refrigerated and frozen crabmeat.



Heron Point  
*Portunus pelagicus*  
Blue Swimming Crab



Caribbean Blue  
*Callinectes sapidus*  
Blue Swimmer Crab



Great Blue  
*Portunus haanii*  
Red Swimming Crab

