



# Care Sheet

## FRESH WATER CRABS



*Holthuisana sp.*

- SIZE:** Up to approximately 6cm.
- RANGE:** In nature they frequent inland rivers and billabongs in northern Australia that dry up in winter. The crabs burrow deep into the sand awaiting the next rainy season.
- TEMPERATURE:** 18°C-25°C.
- WATER:** Ensure pH is kept about 7.0 and the General Hardness is about 100ppm. The fresh water crab cannot survive for long in very acid water. Make sure their water is free from ammonia, nitrite and copper.
- FOOD:** A true scavenger will eat any sinking type fish food that is large enough for them to pick up, particularly fond of frozen foods.
- COLOUR:** The different species of fresh water crabs come in varying colour patterns eg. Tiger stripe, and an attractive pale fawn colour with a chocolate brown irregular band crossing from front to back of the carapace.
- SEXING:** Sexes are easily distinguished with males having larger claws, smaller bodies and narrow tails (folded under the body). Females have smaller claws, larger bodies and wide tails. If nippers or legs are lost, regrowth will occur with the next moult.

### AMPHIBIOUS NATURE

By nature these crabs are amphibious and should be provided with an “island” where they can leave the water at will (a mangrove root protruding from the water is a simple solution).

### HABITATS

These hardy little crabs can be kept with tropical fish or goldfish (providing the temperature does not fall much below 18°C). It is wise to keep slow moving fish, water snails and other invertebrates in separate tanks as fresh water crabs are likely to eat anything they can catch. Sick, dying or dead fish are quickly devoured. Also, ensure there is sufficient cover and enough hiding places for both fish and crabs. Mangrove roots, rocks and caves should be made available for this purpose. A tight fitting cover glass should be used, as they are great escape artists.

Freshwater crabs make fascinating pets. They are active, hardy and a delight to watch.

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