

# Yellowhead Disease (YHD)

Disease agent: Yellowhead virus genotype 1 (YHV1), a virus of the genus *Okavirus* within the family *Roniviridae*.



Presence in Australia: **Exotic**

Presence in Queensland: **Exotic**



Yellowhead virus genotype 1 (YHV1) that causes Yellowhead Disease is the most virulent genotype and has never been recorded in Australia. However other related genotypes do occur in Australia, including Gill Associated Virus (YHV2) and 2 others (YHV6, YHV7), but these strains are around a million times less virulent than the YHV1 strain.

## Signs of Disease:

Crustaceans infected with this virus may exhibit the following signs:



- yellowish head and lighter coloured body with reddish tinge to appendages
- yellow soft swollen digestive gland (which makes the head appear yellow)
- white, yellow or brown gills
- unusual swimming near the water surface
- high mortalities

### Yellowhead Disease (YHD):

Left. Yellowhead disease in giant black tiger prawns from Thailand. Note the yellow heads of infected prawns on the left. The prawns on the right are normal

Photo: Don Lightner

**Host Species affected may include:**

Prawns (all)                  Freshwater shrimp

**Imported seafood including:**

Uncooked prawns (all)

**Ornamental crustaceans including:**

Freshwater shrimps

**At risk fisheries in QLD may include:**

East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery  
River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery

**Introduction Pathways to avoid:**

Do not use imported seafood (particularly imported uncooked prawns) or ornamental crustaceans for bait or berley or release ornamental crustaceans into waterways.

**Basic decontamination information:**

This disease agent can be inactivated by the following treatments: Dessication (drying out), temperatures above 60°C for over 15 minutes, 30 mg/L chlorine for 1 hour, or 0.5 mg/L/min ozone.

**What to do if this disease is suspected:**

If you suspect this disease is present please contact the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (13 25 23) or the National 24 hr Emergency Animal Disease Hotline (1800 675 888) immediately.

**How to collect and store samples for diagnosis:**

If you are taking samples to help authorities to test for this disease, whole crustaceans should be provided alive (if possible) or chilled and on ice, or frozen.

**Learn more**

For more information about YHV and other diseases of aquatic animals of significance to Australia, download the **Aquatic Disease Field Guide App** available for iOS, android and windows devices at these locations:

**IOS**

<https://goo.gl/9UJNp9>

**ANDROID**

<https://goo.gl/T4Tn1X>

**WINDOWS**

<https://goo.gl/Y8Vibi>

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