

Mudskipper

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Mudskippers are members of the Goby family of fish.

They are specially adapted to live out of water for part of the daily cycle. They inhabit the soft muddy areas of the intertidal zone. At the Maroochy Wetland Sanctuary, one species patrols the edges of tidal water and another species constructs a burrow, sometimes sharing one already built by a shrimp. During high tide, the Mudskipper remains submerged, but tidal recessions enable it to emerge. The pectoral fins have evolved to allow a “walking” motion across the mud, while large gill chambers carry sufficient water for continued extraction of oxygen, returning to the water to replenish the supply as necessary. They are highly territorial and warn intruders by raising their dorsal fins. Failure to retreat may see an advance on the intruder.

These amazing little creatures may be seen near the crab hides where they are predated by egrets, herons, and the large aquatic Water Rat.