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On the existence of *Cherax rotundus* in the Severn area, south-eastern Queensland.

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Abstract.

Since its original description in 1941, the taxonomic status of *Cherax rotundus* has been the source of much debate. The type locality, situated within the inland drainages of southern Queensland, has failed to yield any further specimens, and has been considered by subsequent workers to be erroneous. Crayfish specimens with some similar traits have been located in coastal drainages of central New South Wales, and from inland drainages near the border between New South Wales and Victoria. However, there is also some disagreement as to the status of these two taxa, and the insufficient detail about the original, southern Queensland locality precludes resolution of this intriguing species group. In this study, we attempt to clarify some of the long-standing confusion about the species, the type material, the type locality and the collector of the type material. Local historical and anecdotal information about the collector and the type locality lends some support to the validity of the original museum label. After conducting a broad survey of watercourses in the region we have failed to find any specimens, but determined some possible areas where sampling should be intensified in future research. Without any justification to doubt the museum label other than a failure to find further specimens we recommend that, until such time as conclusive data suggests otherwise: (i) the original type locality for *C. rotundus* be upheld, and (ii) specimens from the two southern localities represent two distinct taxa. In other words, the best available information at present suggests that *C. rotundus* Clark has not been recorded in the wild since its original discovery around 70 years ago.

Key Words: *Cherax destructor*, *Cherax rotundus*, crayfish, morphology, yabby, Severn River, Severnlea.

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ON THE EXISTENCE OF *CHERAX ROTUNDUS* IN THE SEVERN AREA, SOUTH-EASTERN QUEENSLAND

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Abstract.

The taxonomic status of *Cherax rotundus* Clark, 1941 is discussed. The type locality, reputedly from the vicinity of Severnlea, southern Queensland, has failed to yield further specimens, and subsequent workers have considered it to be probably erroneous. Crayfish specimens with some similar traits have been located in coastal drainages of central New South Wales, and from inland drainages near the southern border of New South Wales and central Victoria. Although taxonomic resolution of this interesting species group is still incomplete, it is thus of great interest that this original specimen was apparently collected in Queensland. The aim of this study is to obtain information on the naturalist who collected the type specimen, attempt to clarify the type locality, and undertake a crayfish survey in the region. Local historical and anecdotal information suggest that the collector, Ned Sutton, was an avid naturalist who thoroughly studied the flora and fauna across the local area. After conducting a broad survey of watercourses in the region we have failed to find any specimens of *C. rotundus*, but have determined some possible areas where sampling should be intensified in future research.

Key Words: *Cherax destructor*, *Cherax rotundus*, crayfish, morphology, yabby, Severn River, Severnlea.

Introduction

Cherax rotundus was first described by Clark (1941) from the Severn region of southern Queensland, but the veracity of this locality has been disputed ever since. The museum label (Museum of Victoria, NMV J10887) for the holotype designated by Clark (1941) reads 'Muddy River, Severn From E. Sutton Fletcher Q.' Riek (1969) made a note modifying 'Severn' to 'Severnlea', however when