

**Project No.: 100013**

## **Tagging the Freshwater Crayfish of Eastern Australia**

### **Introduction**

The freshwater crayfish of eastern Australia are a very diverse group of animals. One of the main genus is the *Euastacus* crayfish and many of these are very large animals that live for 50 to 100 years plus. Many of the larger *Euastacus* species grow to over one kilo in size and of immense interest to recreational fishers. A couple of good examples are the Murray Crayfish from the Murray Darling river system which is the subject of a very active recreational fishing industry and the Giant Spiny Crayfish from the Sydney region which is the subject of interest for recreational fishers and enthusiasts on the eastern drainage. As part of the Australian Crayfish Project and associated crayfish projects being run by or supported by Australian Aquatic Biological, large numbers of these large crayfish are being regularly captured and released. It is our intention to tag all these crayfish and start a database on the crayfish tagged.

### **Aims**

The aim of this project is to start a full database on the crayfish of eastern Australia. We intend to tag crayfish with a physical plastic tag that is easily identifiable by recreational fishers. We would start an educational program with recreational fishing clubs and the general public to alert them to the significance of the tags and the value of advising the contact number with any information on any crayfish captured. A contact phone number and website would be provided to manage the program ongoing for the next 10 years.

Working with Universities, State DPI's, Councils and management agencies we will/would run a tagging program to ensure that all crayfish captured over the next 10 years are tagged and released. Most state fisheries departments do surveying and require scientific collection permits for the collection of crayfish for research work by other researchers. We would work with all current and future researchers to ensure as many crayfish as possible are tagged.

Also working with recreational fishing clubs and the general public would allow huge numbers of crayfish to be tagged and recorded. The sheer fact that a crayfish is tagged and has a bright orange/yellow tag sticking out of it may result in more crayfish being caught and released. The ultimate aim of this program is the conservation and preservation of our crayfish species.

### **Outline**

The following species are the initial main species of interest,

*Euastacus armatus*

*Euastacus bispinosus*

*Euastacus claytoni*

*Euastacus dharawalus*

*Euastacus kershawi*

*Euastacus simplex*

*Euastacus spinifer*

*Euastacus sulcatus*

*Euastacus suttoni*

*Euastacus valentulus*

*Euastacus woiwuru*

*Euastacus yanga*

*Euastacus yarraensis*

These are the main large recreational fishing species that are currently targeted by recreational fishers. It is these large slow growing species that are most susceptible to overfishing and endangerment.

### **Deliverables**

- Large numbers (thousands) of freshwater crayfish tagged.
- Large database created that includes location, OCL and weight at tagging/capture.
- Ability to track crayfish movements, migrations and translocations.
- Huge database started for all our eastern species with huge benefits to management agencies.
- Ongoing maintenance and update of the database.
- Conservation of the tagged species as recreational fishers more likely to record the tag number and release.
- Data accumulated over time on the recreational fishing effort and the amount of times the same cray is captured, etc.

### **Budget estimates**

Cost of the program, tags, databases, tagging and creation & maintenance of data bases  
\$17,600.00

Ongoing \$8,800.00/year

### **For Further Information**

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