

Excavating *Cherax* sp burrows - Rob attempting to climb out



The Spanner Claw Yabby *Cherax* sp

The ACP southern teams are surveying southern NSW and Victoria for an undescribed species of crayfish. Its referred to as the Spanner Claw Yabby, the Barmah Forest Swamp Yabby or even the Moon Claw Yabby. This is an undescribed species that we have been researching for some time. It's a *Cherax* species with the bottom half of the claw covered in setae. This hairy/furry covering is very distinctive and there are two other species that are similar in Australia. *Cherax rotundus* from Fletcher, Queensland and *Cherax setosus* from Newcastle, NSW are the other two. All 3 species are species of interest to us and we have been researching them all over the years.

In August we got a 3 man team together to survey the Barmah Forest region near Echuca Victoria. One of the team members was Trevor Walsh a member of the local indigenous community and it was with the assistance of Trevor and the local tribal elders that we managed to use the traditional knowledge of the area to track down the elusive Barmah Forest yabby. We had specifically planned to survey in winter as the area we were surveying is off the beaten track on indigenous lands and the home of large numbers of tiger snakes. The plan was to go in winter when the snakes are quiet and hopefully hibernating.



Its a tag team - Trevor digging down following the burrow into the nevernever

The Barmah Forest area is exceptionally dry at the moment and though we found heaps of burrows we were unable to excavate them far enough to get any specimens. Steve Chara, Trevor Walsh and myself spent days excavating in rock hard soil but on the third day admitted defeat and moved on to other locations. The rest of the trip was a lot more successful and we managed to collect 15 specimens from a diverse area of Victoria.

We will keep mapping the distribution of this species and accumulating specimens and knowledge of its ecology.



Rob and Trevor Walsh sorting the catch on the bank of Broken Creek, Barmah Vic



Steve Chara with a *Cherax sp* Barjarg Vic

ROB PLAYING IN THE MUD - BAILLIESTON, VICTORIA

1. Find a Burrow on the roadside



2. Dig it out



3. Have a feel



4. Pump out some water



5. Pump out some more water



6. Dig deep and grab the critter



7. This is what its all about - a spanner claw yabby





Cherax sp. Spec 2258 Rubicon River, Victoria



Cherax sp. Spec 2270 Broken River, Victoria