

Media release

14 July 2020

What you don't know about our Giant Freshwater Crayfish

You likely know of our threatened Giant Freshwater Crayfish (*Astacopsis gouldi*), found only in northern Tasmania. It's what people *don't* know about this iconic creature which led Cradle Coast Authority (CCA) to create a video about the largest freshwater crustacean in the world.

Mrs Fiona Marshall is the Coordinator of the Giant Freshwater Crayfish Recovery Project which aims to improve the habitat and numbers of the threatened Giant Freshwater Crayfish in the Cradle Coast region.

"This species was once prolific in the rivers and streams of the Cradle Coast region. This video aims to increase awareness of the crayfish's needs and simple actions landowners can take to help them thrive." said Mrs Marshall.

Riverbank vegetation protected from stock grazing along rivers, streams and gullies makes a huge difference to the Giant Freshwater Crayfish. Trees provide shade which keeps the water cool. Vegetation keeps the water clear by filtering sediment which would otherwise enter the waterway. Dead trees in streams provide vital woody debris which the Crayfish can hide under. The Crayfish eat wood, bark and rotting vegetation, so if there is no vegetation on the banks, there is no food for Crayfish.

The video also explains CCA's *Giant Freshwater Crayfish Recovery Project*, a four-year targeted project restoring river habitat in river reaches vital to the species survival. The video features our local Cradle Coast landscapes and rivers and a beautiful blue female crayfish who was measured and tagged as part of baseline monitoring for the project.

Mr Todd Walsh has been monitoring Giant Freshwater Crayfish across the region for decades and is undertaking the species monitoring for this project.

"Poaching is a massive issue for these creatures. It's 14 years before a female will breed, so if you take out three or four of the larger breeding females, you are knocking the population back decades." said Mr Walsh.

Fishing for Giant Freshwater Crayfish is illegal and can incur fines of up to \$10,000.

The Giant Freshwater Crayfish Recovery Project video can be viewed on the [Cradle Coast Authority website](http://www.cradlecoast.com) or CCA's NRM Facebook page.

This project is supported by Cradle Coast Authority, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



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CCA is jointly owned by the nine Councils of western and north-western Tasmania, to help them achieve regional outcomes and maintain strong local government, by working together.

