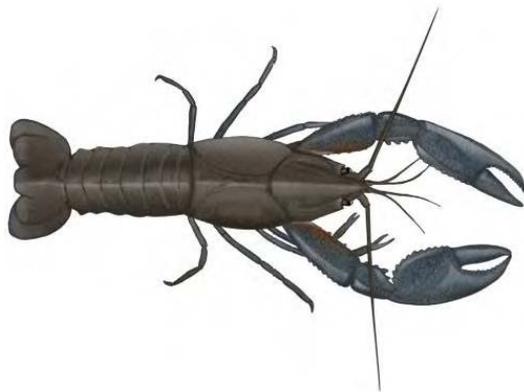


Fishing for Yabbies in New South Wales

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Recreational and Indigenous Unit

Figure 1. The freshwater Yabby (*Cherax destructor*)



Introduction

Best known of the 100 or so freshwater crayfish species found in Australia the Yabby inhabits the still, warm waters of the lowlands west of the Great Dividing Range in NSW. The common Yabby is one of several species of smooth-shelled crayfish in the genus *Cherax*. Its scientific name (*Cherax destructor*) refers to its burrowing habit. It can cause considerable damage by burrowing into dam walls and levee banks. In times of drought the Yabby can burrow many metres down into the ground where it can lie in a dormant state for several years until the next rains or flood bring conditions suitable for growth and breeding.

The Yabby is in the middle of the food chain and is basically vegetarian, but also scavenges decaying plant and animal matter. Yabbies will eat just about anything. In times of overcrowding and shortage of food, Yabbies will eat their own kind. In turn, they are an important part of the diet of the white ibis, several species of cormorant and warm water fishes such as Murray Cod and Golden Perch.

Fishing for Yabbies forms part of the inland commercial fishery but is also a popular recreational fishery in the far western parts of the state. Catches in the Riverina, Lower Murray and the Far West lakes and rivers are usually highest during February, March and April, decreasing in

winter and spring. The Yabby is taken both to eat and to be used as bait, especially for Murray Cod.

Reproduction occurs in spring and summer and the female can carry around 800 eggs under her tail. An Yabbies carrying eggs ('berried') must be returned to the water immediately to ensure the next generation of this valuable species.

Closures

The use and possession of yabby / opera house traps are banned in public waters east of the Newell Highway and in three stretches of river west of the Newell Highway: the Edward River upstream of Stevens Weir, the Murray River upstream of the Echuca/Moama Rd Bridge and the Murrumbidgee River upstream of Darlington Point Rd Bridge. (See closure map below.)

All yabby traps are required to have a bycatch reduction device with a maximum diameter of 90mm (fixed ring) fitted to all entrance funnels. The intent of the general yabby trap closure and the bycatch reduction device is to prevent the death of platypus and minimise capture of air-breathing animals such as turtles and water rats. Other closures exist throughout NSW. Contact your local fisheries office for further information.

Figure 2. Map of yabby/opera house trap closures



Figure 3. Yabby trap/opera house trap

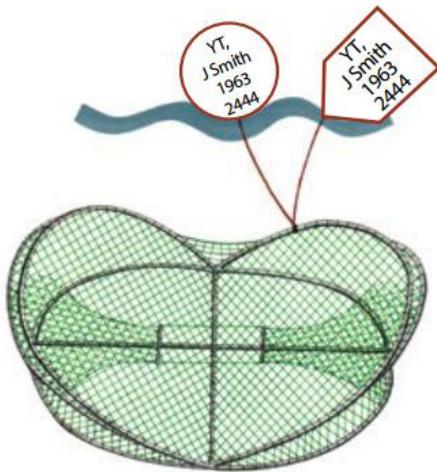
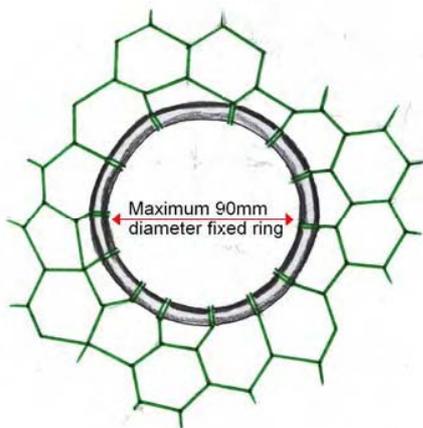


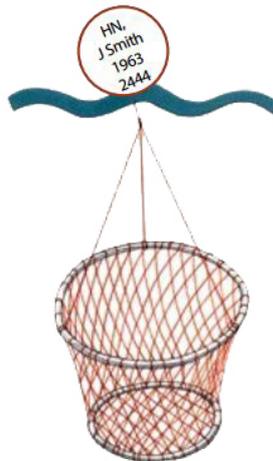
Figure 4. Yabby trap/opera house trap entrance funnel



Yabby trap/opera house trap table

Minimum dimensions:	1 m length x 0.6 m width x 0.3 m depth
Netting or mesh size:	13 mm minimum measured across the stretched diagonal from knot to knot. Rigid mesh such as metal or hard plastic is prohibited.
Entrance funnels:	A bycatch reduction device must be fitted to all entrance funnels. The device must consist of a rigid ring with a maximum internal diameter of 90 mm permanently affixed to entry funnels at some point along their length, so as to restrict the entry funnels to a maximum opening of 90 mm measured in any direction. This is to protect platypus turtles and birds from entering the trap in search of food and getting caught in the trap.
Maximum number:	Unless otherwise specified, up to five traps may be set, used or in your possession.
Maximum set time:	Must not be set for more than 24 hours in any period of 48 hours.
Identification:	Position of the trap located by a buoy or tag. If the trap is identified by a buoy, the buoy must be positioned above the trap and measure not less than 100 mm in all dimensions and must be 50 mm above the water. Any rope attached to the buoy must not be floating on the surface of the water. If the trap is identified by a tag, the tag must be attached to the trap at or above the water level, have dimensions of at least 80 mm by 45 mm. Identification tags and buoys must clearly display the letters "YT" with the initial, surname, year of birth and postcode of the person using the trap, in clearly visible letters not less than 15 mm in height in a contrasting colour.
Waters:	May be used in inland waters to take Yabbies <i>except</i> trout waters and closed waters plus the following areas where platypus are found. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) waters east of the Newell Highway; (ii) the Murray River from the Newell Highway at Tocumwal downstream to the Echuca Road Bridge; (iii) the Edward River from the Murray River at Picnic Point downstream to Stevens Weir and (iv) the Murrumbidgee River from Narrandera downstream to the Darlington Point Road Bridge (refer to map on previous page).

Figure 5. Hoop/Lift net

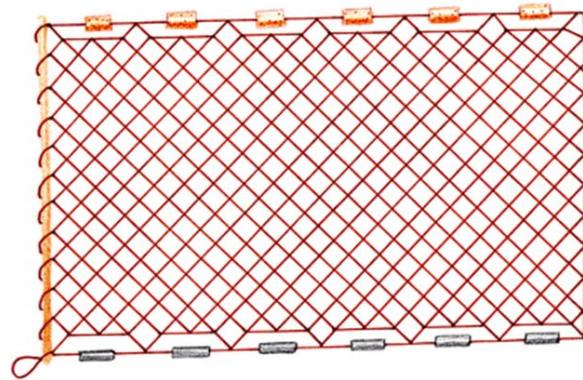


Hoop/Lift net table

Maximum dimension:	Net attached to not more than 2 hoops, rings or frames not exceeding 1.25 m in their greatest diameter (or at their greatest diagonal); hoops, rings or frames not attached to each other by means of any rigid frame; total length from the centre of the plane of the hoop, ring or frame to the extremity of the net, or between the 2 hoops, rings or frames, not exceeding 1 m
Mesh size:	Mesh not less than 13 mm.
Maximum number:	Unless otherwise specified, five nets may be set, used or in your possession.
Maximum set time:	Cannot be left set for more than 24 hours.
Identification:	The buoy must be positioned above the net and measure not less than 100 mm in all dimensions and must be 50 mm above the water with the letters "HN" with the initial, surname, year of birth and postcode of the person using the net, 15 mm in height, clearly visible and in a contrasting colour to the buoy. Any rope attached to the buoy must not be floating on the surface of the water.
Waters:	May be used in inland waters to take Yabbies except closed waters and trout waters (other than using up to 5 hoop or lift nets to take Yabbies in Googong Dam or in Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne)

Note: The net is used only as a hand implement and only by the method of lowering into the water and then drawing the net vertically to the surface.

Figure 6. Hand-hauled yabby net



Hand-hauled yabby net table

Maximum dimension:	Up to 6 m in length measured along the headline.
Mesh size:	40 mm maximum measured across the diagonal.
Maximum number of user's:	Propelled by one (1) person. One (1) other person may assist in the operation of the net. May be used with or without hauling lines or poles.
Maximum set time:	Zero. Must be continuously and manually propelled. Not to be set, staked or joined with any other net.
Waters:	May only be used to take Yabbies in inland waters being ground tanks, bore drains or lagoons. Not permitted in any river or public dam, or in closed waters or trout waters.

Note: Can only be used in ground tanks, bore drains or lagoons. Must be continuously and manually propelled, not set or staked or joined or placed together with any other net. A hand hauled yabby net is to be used as a hand implement only.

Fishing laws

A bag and possession limit of 200 Yabbies per person applies when in, on or adjacent to waters or transporting or storing the Yabbies.

You may encounter other species of crayfish whilst fishing for Yabbies such as Murray Crayfish and other freshwater spiny crayfish. Different regulations pertaining to the capture of these species apply. Regulations are designed to protect and conserve our fish stocks and their habitats.

Consult the NSW Recreational Freshwater Fishing Guide, check the website www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au or contact your local fisheries office for more details on other fishing regulations in NSW waters. Expect to see

fisheries officers patrolling foreshores, ramps and waterways. Report illegal fishing to your local fisheries office or Fishers Watch Phonenumber on free call 1800 043 536.

NSW Recreational Fishing Fee

When you are fishing in NSW waters, both freshwater and saltwater, you are required by law to carry a receipt showing the payment of the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee. This applies when line fishing (rod or hand line), bowfishing, or when using gear such as yabby traps, hoop nets, hand hauled yabby nets and shrimp traps.

You can pay at many outlets throughout NSW, such as most fishing tackle shops, caravan parks, local shops, service stations, many Kmart stores, via the website www.licence.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 369 365.

You must carry your recreational fishing fee receipt with you at all times while fishing for Yabbies and other fish in NSW.

Your fishing licence supports your sport! All licence fees are put into special trusts overseen by angler committees to improve recreational fishing.

Access

There are varied angler access rights within Australia and each state may differ. Anglers will need to request consent to cross private land by contacting the owner of that land. If entry is granted, make sure you use formed tracks to access the water and take care not to interfere with any stock or pastoral activities. If accessing a waterway via public lands please be mindful of any conditions of entry. Please follow directions of signage or other instructions when gaining access to waterways via public lands. Public lands are part of a larger network run largely by the state and often offer areas to fish where consent is not required.

In all cases in NSW anglers have a legal right to fish rivers or streams from a boat, or while walking along the stream bed, as long as they keep well within the bed and bank. This right only extends to that section of river bed which is alternatively covered in the normal rising and falling of a river. This does not extend to those times when the rivers have broken their banks and are considered to be in flood.

Don't litter, leave gates as you found them and remember that permission to enter and fish does not necessarily include the right to camp, picnic, take animals, leave rubbish or carry firearms. For fishing access enquiries call the NSW Inland Angler Access Manager on 02 6042 4214

For further information visit the NSW DPI website www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 550 474.

NSW DPI Inland Fisheries Offices

Central Tablelands	Research Station Drive, Bathurst 02 6331 1428 0488 220 443
Hume	3/556 Macauley Street, Albury 02 6042 4228 0419 185 548
Far West	Agricultural Research and Advisory Station, Silver City Highway, Dareton 03 5019 8408 0427 429 579
Macquarie	Cnr Hampden and Cobra Streets, Dubbo 02 6881 1208 0438 410 585
Monaro	Kosciusko Road, Jindabyne 02 6451 3402 0427 460 226
New England	127 Otho Street, Inverell 02 6722 1388 0419 185 532
Peel	4 Marsden Park Road, Calala 02 6763 1132 0417 480 933
Riverina	449 Charlotte Street, Deniliquin 03 5881 9928 0427 897 145
South West Slopes	64 Fitzroy Street, Tumut 02 6947 9028 0408 484 299

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (October 2014).

However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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