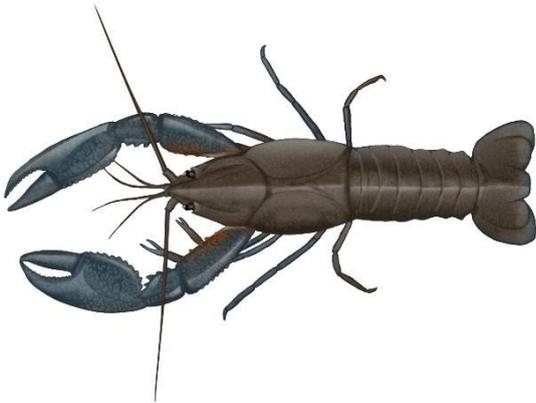


# Fishing for Yabbies in New South Wales

**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. Yabbies carrying eggs ('berried') must be returned to the water immediately to ensure the next generation of this valuable species.

## Fishing methods

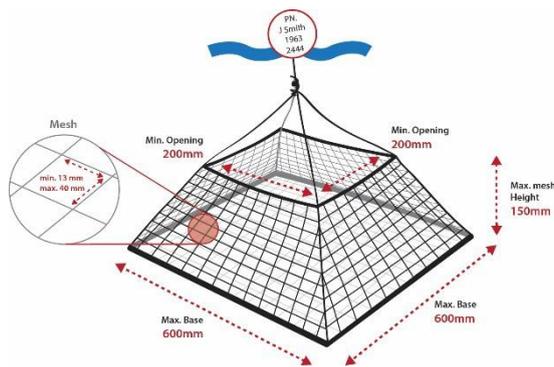


Figure 1 – Open pyramid lift net

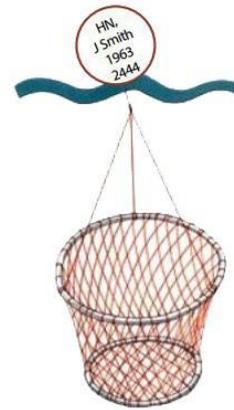
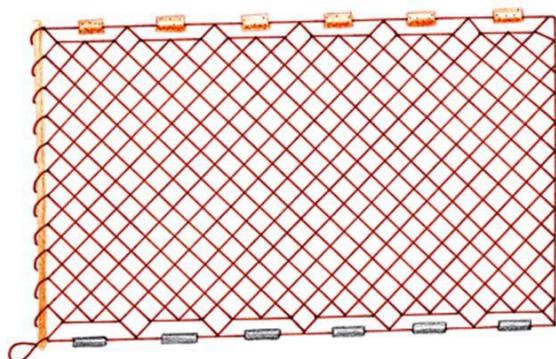


Figure 2 – Hoop/ lift net

<b>Maximum dimensions</b>	Netting with a horizontal opening at the top of not less than 200 mm in all dimensions; parallel to the base of the net with a maximum height of not more than 150 mm and a maximum base size of 600 mm in length and width	<b>Maximum dimension:</b>	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
<b>Mesh size</b>	Between 13 mm and 40 mm, calculated across the diagonal	<b>Mesh size:</b>	Mesh not less than 13 mm.
<b>Maximum number</b>	Unless otherwise specified, up to five hoop / open pyramid lift nets may be set, used or in your possession	<b>Maximum number:</b>	Unless otherwise specified, up to five hoop / open pyramid lift nets may be set, used or in your possession
<b>Maximum set time:</b>	Cannot be left set for more than 24 hours	<b>Maximum set time:</b>	Cannot be left set for more than 24 hours
<b>Identification:</b>	The buoy must be positioned above the net, must be 50 mm above the water and must clearly display the letters "PN", with the users initial, surname, year of birth and postcode, 15 mm in height, clearly visible and in contrasting colour to the buoy. Any rope attached to the buoy must not be floating on the surface of the water	<b>Identification:</b>	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
<b>Waters:</b>	May be used in inland waters to take yabbies except closed waters and trout waters (other than Googong Dam or Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne).	<b>Waters:</b>	May be used in inland waters to take yabbies except closed waters and trout waters (other than Googong Dam or Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne).



**Figure 3. Hand hauled yabby net**

	Up to 6 m in length measured along the headline
	40 mm maximum measured across the diagonal
	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
	Zero. Must be continuously and manually propelled. Not to be set, staked or joined with any other net
	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. 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](http://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), or when using gear such as open pyramid lift nets, 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](http://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 on the stream bed, as long as they keep within the bed and bank. This right only extends to that section of the riverbed 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 further information visit the NSW DPI website [www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 550 474.

Region	Location	Office
Central Tablelands	Bathurst	02 6331 1428
Hume	Albury	02 6051 7763
Far West	Dareton	03 5019 8408
Macquarie	Dubbo	02 6881 1208
Monaro	Jindabyne	02 6451 3402
New England	Inverell	02 6721 9845
Peel	Tamworth	02 6763 1132
Riverina	Narrandera	03 5881 9928
South West Slopes	Tumut	02 6941 1404

V13/4065#25, PUB21/399

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