

# Freshwater pest

## Redclaw crayfish (*Cherax quadricarinatus*)



Image: Adam Herman

We're working for  
Western Australia.

**Have you seen or caught  
this crayfish species in  
Western Australia outside  
of the Ord River system?**



Image: Angel Fintan

**Distinguishing features:**

- medium to large-sized crayfish up to 25cm in length
- body is usually a mottled blue-green
- males have a distinct bright red patch on outer margin of claw
- four raised longitudinal ridges on top of the head.

## **What can you do if you have seen or caught a redclaw crayfish?**

Make a note of when and where you saw or caught it, including GPS readings if possible.

Take photographs, particularly focusing on the claws and head.

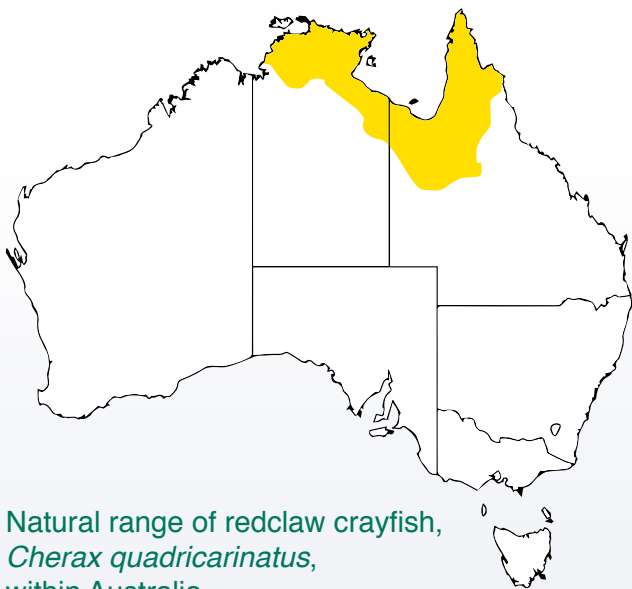
If you've caught one do not return it to the water. Dispatch the crayfish humanely - the RSPCA has further details; search their website, [rspca.org.au](http://rspca.org.au). Report the above details and send the photos to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development via email to [aquatic.biosecurity@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:aquatic.biosecurity@dpird.wa.gov.au) or call FishWatch on 1800 815 507

## **Why are redclaw crayfish a problem?**

Redclaw crayfish are tolerant of a wide variety of habitats, from fast flowing rivers to still billabongs. The females are able to spawn multiple times per year meaning the population can multiply quickly and become self-sustaining. It is an exceptionally hardy species able to survive for more than 48 hours out of water, and can therefore move between water bodies when conditions are suitable. Because of these reasons it is practically impossible to get rid of once established in river systems and waterways it has invaded.

Redclaw crayfish eat a wide variety of prey including small aquatic invertebrates (zooplankton), molluscs (aquatic snails), as well as aquatic plants and detritus. This diverse diet means this species could predate on and directly compete for resources with native freshwater aquatic animals (including fish and turtles), of north-western Australia.

## Where does the Redclaw crayfish naturally live and what kind of environments can it spread to?



Natural range of redclaw crayfish, *Cherax quadricarinatus*, within Australia

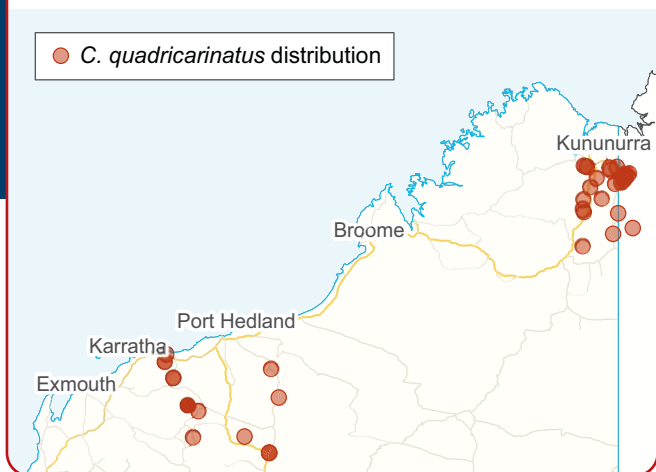
Source: [nt.gov.au/dpifm](http://nt.gov.au/dpifm)

Redclaw crayfish are not native to Western Australia.

However, the redclaw crayfish is native to northerly and westerly flowing rivers of tropical Queensland, northerly and easterly flowing rivers of the Northern Territory and areas of southern Papua New Guinea.

In 2000, a population of redclaw crayfish were found in Lake Kununurra, Ord River in the East Kimberley region. In late 2013, redclaw crayfish were detected in the Harding River. Redclaw crayfish have subsequently been detected in Karijini and Millstream National Parks. Redclaw crayfish is now known from five catchments in the Pilbara Region of WA.

# Redclaw crayfish distribution in Northern WA



Due to redclaw crayfish's ability to escape and survive out of water it is recommended that they should not be kept for ornamental or other purposes (except licensed aquaculture sites):

- If you do have redclaw crayfish for ornamental purposes never release them into the wild. Fish tanks and ornamental fishponds should be designed so that redclaw crayfish can't escape.
- Unwanted redclaw crayfish should be taken back to suppliers or disposed of humanely. The RSPCA has further details; search their website, [rspca.org.au](http://rspca.org.au)

## Fishing for redclaw crayfish

**Lake Kununurra:** permitted using yabby style traps.

**Kimberley (other areas):** only fishing methods legal for Cherabin permitted.

**Pilbara:** Traps are not permitted. However, other legal freshwater fishing methods including drop nets, scoop nets and pole snare are permitted.



Image: Kevin Cutmore

**Water supply catchments:** fishing is usually not permitted by the Water Corporation.

Any redclaw crayfish captured should be immediately euthanised. No redclaw crayfish should be transported live.

Please refer to the Department's current fishing rules available at: **[fish.wa.gov.au/rules](http://fish.wa.gov.au/rules)**

This pest sheet was produced with the support of: Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

## Further information

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### **Aquatic Pest Biosecurity**

[aquatic.biosecurity@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:aquatic.biosecurity@dpird.wa.gov.au)

### **Freshwater fish distribution**

[freshwater.fish.wa.gov.au](http://freshwater.fish.wa.gov.au)

### **Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**

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**[dpird.wa.gov.au](http://dpird.wa.gov.au)**

