

Primefact

Narrow Euastacus – Euastacus angustus

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DPIRD Fisheries, Threatened Species Unit

Introduction

The Narrow Euastacus is a small freshwater crayfish endemic to northeastern New South Wales. It occurs entirely within the subtropical rainforests of the Border Ranges National Park, where it is known from a small headwater stream at around 760 m elevation. In NSW, the Narrow Euastacus is listed as a Critically Endangered species.



Figure 1 Narrow Euastacus (Rob McCormack)

- A narrow, laterally compressed body (hence the common name “narrow” or “slender dwarf crayfish”).
- Light olive brown to orange, brown dorsal colouring and cream ventral surface
- Orange claws, with darker orange to red articulations and washed bluish green tips.
- Adult size is small for the freshwater spiny crayfish genus, documented as having an occipital carapace length (OCL) of up to 28mm.

Habitat and ecology

The Narrow Euastacus occupies small ephemeral tributaries, wet soaks and damp gullies within subtropical rainforest. These habitats often lack surface water; however, the species is adapted to survive in cool, moist microhabitats dependent on soil moisture rather than streamflow.

Description

The Narrow Euastacus is a small-sized, poorly spinose Euastacus species with:

NSW GOVERNMENT

**Indicative distribution
in NSW**

— *Euastacus angustus*

Warwick
Lismore
Grafton
Coffs Harbour

Localities Diagram to scale

1:125,000 @ A4

0 25 km

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The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are advised to check the accuracy of the information with the appropriate authority of the Government of New South Wales and Regional Development or the user's independent advice.

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A photograph showing a stream bed with large, moss-covered rocks and fallen branches. The water is shallow and clear, revealing the rocky bottom. The moss is a vibrant green, and the branches are light brown and weathered. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed stream environment.

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fecundity (likely 20–80 eggs per brood).

- Very limited dispersal ability as unsuitable surrounding habitat restricts movement.

The species is presumed to be omnivorous, feeding on detritus, plant material and small invertebrates.



Figure 4 Narrow Euastacus (Rob McCormack)

Why is the Narrow Euastacus threatened?

The highly restricted distribution of this species puts all individuals in the population at considerable risk of extirpation by a single stochastic event impacting the species across its very small range. The primary threats include:

- Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (heatwaves, storms, droughts).
- Increased average temperatures projected to exceed the species physiological tolerance.
- Altered hydrology, including reduced soil moisture and increased seasonality of soaks and gullies.

- Increased bushfire risk, reducing canopy cover, increasing sedimentation, and altering water/soil temperature regimes.
- Illegal collection for aquarium trade.
- Invasive species.
- Incursion into Australia of crayfish plague

Conservation and recovery actions

- Implement education initiatives to improve the identification and awareness of the protected status of Narrow Euastacus.
- Compile existing information to identify knowledge gaps in biology, ecology and life history as well as associated threats.
- Establishment of population monitoring programs to identify distributions, new subpopulations of the species, and threats to the species.
- Fire management planning to reduce risk to key habitat

Legal implications

It is an offence to buy, sell, possess or harm a Narrow Euastacus (or any other threatened species in NSW) without a specific permit, licence or approval, and significant penalties apply. For Critically Endangered species, these penalties can include fines of up to \$220,000 and up to two years in prison.

There can also be significant penalties for causing damage to the habitat of a threatened species without approval.

The impacts of developments or activities that require consent or approval (in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979) must be assessed and considered by consent or determining authorities. Where such actions are likely to result in significant impact on a threatened species or its habitat, a detailed species impact statement must be prepared.

Strategies to be adopted for promoting the recovery of the Narrow Euastacus must be set out in the NSW DPIRD Priorities Action Statement.

Further information

For further information see the NSW DPIRD website:
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Contact the NSW DPIRD Threatened Species Unit:
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