



Giant freshwater crayfish: enhancing habitat conservation

OUR PROJECT

The giant freshwater crayfish (GFC), *Astacopsis gouldi*, is the largest freshwater invertebrate in the world. Endemic to rivers in northern Tasmania, the GFC is threatened by habitat loss, poaching, siltation of waterways, and the effects of climate change.

To address these challenges and help secure the future survival of this iconic species, NRM North is undertaking a project through to June 2028 to expand the distribution of existing populations of GFC, by improving riparian habitat quality and connectivity along 17 kms of streams in the Pipers, Little Forester, and Great Forester catchments.

These outcomes will be achieved by partnering with private landholders to control stock access to rivers and to enhance riparian vegetation. This will not only provide stream shading and reduce water temperature, but also reduce sedimentation and riverbank erosion.

In addition, NRM North will engage with industry stakeholders and public land managers to foster practice change in waterway management.

GET INVOLVED

Funding is available for on-ground riparian remediation works and we invite landholders in the Pipers, Little Forester, and Great Forester catchments, to participate in the



Giant freshwater crayfish (*Astacopsis gouldi*)

project. Your involvement can make a significant difference in conservation efforts and contribute to the long-term survival of the giant freshwater crayfish.

Benefits of participation include:

- Contributing to the preservation of a threatened species.
- Enhancing biodiversity on your land.
- Potential for collaboration with scientists, researchers, and conservationists.
- Recognition for your commitment to environmental stewardship.

MORE INFORMATION?

Express your interest [here](#) by 24 December 2025. For more information contact Biodiversity Coordinator Nikita Sarangdhar: nsarangdhar@nrmnorth.org.au or 6333 7784.

CASE STUDY

Clare and Nigel Russell run a small cattle farm in Lilydale, in Tasmania's north-east. Since starting river restoration activities in 2016, they've planted over 5,000 plants, fenced 3 kms of river, and provided alternative water points for stock.

"We purchased the property in 2014 when stock still had access to the river, which created problems such as erosion, decreased water quality and the destruction of riparian habitat ... our first planting was in 2015, and we have been planting every year since, including a number of plants we grew ourselves," said Nigel.

The Russell's are active members of the Lilydale Landcare group, who are working on a community GFC project in Underwood. In addition to an increase in GFC sightings, there have also been benefits to productivity and land management.



Before (2015): a lack of stock fencing and limited riparian vegetation is an unfavourable habitat for the giant freshwater crayfish. After (2023): stock exclusion and revegetation work provide a safe refuge for the threatened species.



Nigel Russell, standing in front of one of the NRM North supported revegetated areas on his Lilydale property.

"From a land management point of view, although we have given up some land for revegetation, we can now manage the land better. The fenced paddock allows for efficient grazing and more grass to be grown - therefore it's more productive and profitable," he said.

The benefits of the revegetation efforts are widespread. Mr Russell said the additional shelterbelts are great for pastures and stock, and there's cleaner water for stock as well.

He said having volunteers to assist with the plantings was crucial and those events came with added bonuses of meeting community members, getting kids involved, learning how to collect seed and propagate native plants.

"There are also the aesthetic benefits and the creation of an environment that we like to enjoy, and the kids like to play in," said Nigel.

The message for other landholders thinking of doing the same thing? "Do it. The only way to eat an elephant is a mouthful at a time! The scale of the project can seem daunting with fencing, contractors, plants, and ground preparation, but it has so many benefits."



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