



Murray River Crayfish

Euastacus armatus

Vulnerable

The overall objective of the Action Plan is to maintain the long-term, viable, wild populations of Murray River Crayfish as a component of the indigenous aquatic biological resources of the ACT and as a contribution to the regional and national conservation of the species.

Strategies in the Action Plan include:

- Habitat conservation: manage, maintain, and increase habitat area while connecting populations where the species occurs.
- Protection: ensure populations are protected from recreational, residential, and infrastructure actions through legislative and management changes.
- Research: improved understanding of the species ecology, habitat and threats.

Population Trend (2018–23): Uncertain

Historical inefficiencies and imprecise survey methodology means that the population trend of Murray River Crayfish in the ACT is relatively uncertain. However, physical characteristics of captured individuals provided a positive insight.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of individuals within the 80-90mm OCL size, with larger individuals having greater reproductive potential as they can carry more eggs.

The OCL (length between eyes and end of main body segment) determines the number of eggs per female and influences population recovery. Having a larger average OCL suggests the possibility of strong reproductive growth, and OCL has been trending upwards in ACT populations since 2005.

Key conservation actions include ban on possession of opera house nets and a net swap campaign to protect Murray River Crayfish and native aquatic animals, and community engagement to better deploy monitoring methods.

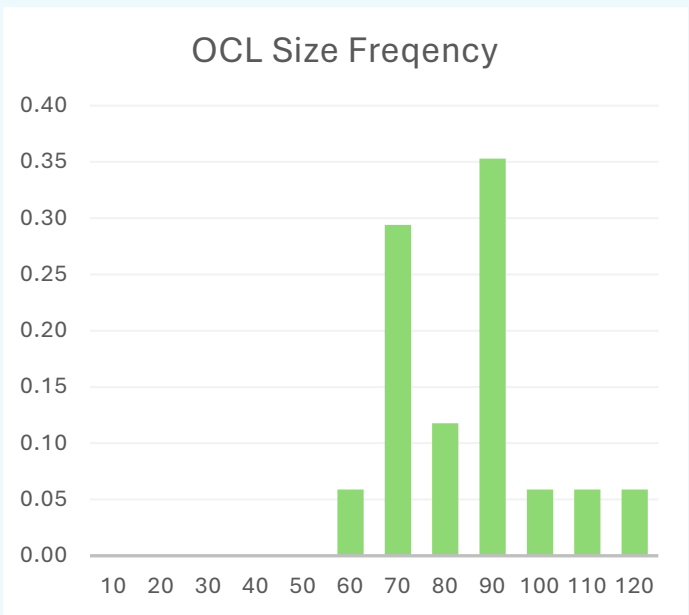


Figure 1: distribution frequency of OCL of 17 individuals surveyed (Eco Logical 2023).

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Action Indicator	Progress 2018-23
Protection	
The Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Cotter River populations are protected for conservation.	Achieved
The species remains listed as protected.	Achieved
Monitoring	
Assessment of additional methods for suitability in monitoring key locations and threats; trends in abundance are known for key sites and management actions recorded.	Not achieved
Populations are apparently stable or increasing (considering probable seasonal/annual effects on abundance fluctuations and monitoring methods).	Partially achieved - ongoing
Habitat conservation and restoration	
Riparian vegetation improved.	Achieved
Aquatic habitats and riparian revegetation adjacent to or linking key habitat is managed to improve suitability for the species (indicated by an appropriate sedimentation and flow regime, presence of or establishment of good quality riparian vegetation and in-stream habitat).	Partially achieved - ongoing
Research and experimental management	
Research undertaken and reported and, where appropriate, applied to the conservation management of the species.	Partially Achieved - ongoing
Engagement and/or collaboration with other agencies and individuals.	Partially achieved - ongoing

Note: this is a summary of progress for action indicators. For the full Effectiveness Review Report, please contact OfficeofNatureConservation@act.gov.au.



Outcome: Despite surveys suggesting the possibility of a stable population, comprehensive and efficient surveying of the species remains difficult. Therefore, the population trend status of the species is determined as uncertain with future priority being given to developing alternative and more accurate monitoring techniques. However, assessment of physical characteristics suggests a positive trend in Murray River Crayfish population. Further monitoring is needed to confirm this finding.

What's next for the Murray River Crayfish?

- Determine an accurate monitoring methodology as well as improve detection efficiency of Murray River Crayfish within their determined range.
- Improve understanding and determine the potential impacts of new developments in Canberra, particularly across the Western Edge Urban Expansion Area.
- Assess the genetics and health of the ACT and regional population of Murray River Crayfish.