

**B**urrowing  
**C**rayfish  
**G**roup  
**R**ecovery  
**P**lan



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Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES,  
WATER and ENVIRONMENT

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Inside photo: *Engaeus orramakunna* (N. Doran) (Listed as Vulnerable on Threatened Species Protection Act 1995).

Front cover photo:



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# Summary

## Current Species Status

Four Tasmanian *Engaeus* species are of conservation significance. The Mt. Arthur, Scottsdale, Burnie and Furneaux burrowing crayfish (*E. orramakunna*, *E. spinicaudatus*, *E. yabbimunna*, and *E. martigener*, respectively) are currently all listed under both the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The first three have also been identified as Priority Species requiring recovery action under the *Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 1997*.

## Habitat Requirements and Threatening Factors

All four species are endemic to Tasmania and have highly restricted distributions. Habitat requirements are governed by water quality and availability, and the presence and quality of soil and native riparian vegetation. Threatening processes include urban and industrial pollution, inappropriate agricultural and forestry activity, long term fire effects, clearance and removal of native vegetation, sedimentation, and waterway disturbance or alteration of drainage. Each of the four species has been subjected to differing degrees of each of these processes.

## Recovery Plan Objectives

### *Overall objective*

To stabilise and improve the conservation status of these species so that they may be considered for down listing according to population sizes and trends, area and occupancy and security of habitat within or beyond the time span of this plan.

### *Specific objectives*

1. Improve habitat protection for each species.
2. Increase public awareness and involvement in threatened species protection.
3. Ensure each species persists in the long-term throughout its area of occupancy.

## Recovery Criteria

1. Improved security for each species through reservation, improved land use techniques and management agreements with landholders and forestry, agricultural and urban or public stakeholders.
2. Increased public awareness of these species and involvement in or willingness to be involved in conservation related programs.
3. Each species measured at selected monitoring sites indicates overall stability or long-term increase in populations or range.

## Recovery Actions Needed

1. Assessment of habitat (particularly for *E. martigener*).
2. Improvement of reservation status for all species.
3. Habitat management within agricultural areas.
4. Habitat management within forestry and commercial harvesting areas.
5. Habitat management within urban and other areas.
6. Community involvement and education.
7. Population and habitat monitoring, combined with the results of actions 1-6 (as above).

## Estimated Cost of Recovery (2000 prices in \$000s/year)

Scientific Officer salary & on costs are divided between individual actions.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>Total</b>
2001	45.3	14.4	67.6	11.7	11.8	16.1	13.3	20.4	41.6	0.4	242.6
2002			79.9	41.6	23.4	40.6	13.3	23.4	34.0	0.4	256.6
2003			79.9	41.6	23.4	40.6	13.3	23.4	34.0	0.4	256.6
2004							6.4	23.4	8.0	0.4	38.2
2005							6.4	23.4	8.0	0.4	38.2
<b>Total</b>	45.3	14.4	227.4	94.9	58.6	97.3	52.7	114.0	125.6	2.0	832.2

Costings do not incorporate community and volunteer time.

### **Biodiversity Benefits**

Protection and management of the four *Engaeus* species will have direct conservation benefits for other stream-dwelling and stream-associated species (including Nationally listed species) within these areas. It will also have direct beneficial consequences for water quality and waterway health affecting the Burnie and Dorset communities. On Flinders Island, the Strzelecki National Park has been identified as containing significant areas of habitat that have been lost from elsewhere on the Bass Strait Islands (Walsh 1999). In addition to the crayfish, the park contains valuable and high levels of biodiversity, and is noted as being of high scientific interest “due to the high number of endemic species, rare flora and fauna and significant vegetation communities” it contains.

# Introduction

## Description

Species of *Engaeus* are small freshwater crayfish, with a general body length of under ten centimetres. They vary in colour from orange to reddish brown, grey-blue and purple. During the breeding season (late spring to summer), females carry large orange eggs and recently hatched young under their tail. They are believed to eat rotting wood, detritus, root material and occasionally animal material.

Most species of *Engaeus* are characterised by their ability to burrow, often to considerable depths, and specimens are only rarely seen above ground or in standing water (Horwitz 1990a). Burrows often have chimneys of pelleted soil where they meet the surface, and in sheltered areas these may be quite high (up to 40 cm). Burrows can be simple and shallow or complex, deep and extensive, and a burrow system may often be the product of several generations of crayfish activity. Burrows may be directly connected to streams or lakes (type 1), may connect to the water table (type 2), or may simply rely on run-off to stay wet (type 3). Those relying solely on run-off are only found in Australia and are specific to *Engaeus* species, making them the most terrestrial of the world's freshwater crayfish (Horwitz & Richardson 1986). Consequently, their dispersal through waterways may be limited, leading to restricted ranges and a high degree of local speciation.

## Taxonomic Status

*Engaeus* is one of four freshwater crayfish genera native to Tasmania, the other three being *Parastacoides*, *Geocharax*, and *Astacopsis*. The genera can be distinguished on the basis of chelae (claw) orientation and shape, carapace grooves, and the location and number of spines on the body (Horwitz 1988a). There are 35 species of *Engaeus* found in south-east Australia, 20 of which are endemic to mainland Australia, 13 are endemic to Tasmania, and two are found in both. Horwitz (1990a, 1994) has recently reviewed the taxonomic status of the genus, in which he described the four species covered here.

## Distribution

Tasmanian *Engaeus* species are mostly found in the north and west of the state, with both the north-east and north-west characterised by their own distinct subgroups. The distribution of some of these has been extensively studied (Horwitz 1986, 1988b, 1990a & 1996; Doran & Richards 1996; Doran 1998).

The genus displays remarkable diversity given the relatively small geographic area over which it occurs, and is characterised by a jig-saw pattern of distinct and interlocking ranges for individual species. Overlap between species does occur, but is not the norm. Some species have very wide geographic ranges, while others are very restricted. Four Tasmanian *Engaeus* species are of conservation concern due to their small ranges:

*E. orramakunna* (the Mt. Arthur burrowing crayfish),

*E. spinicaudatus* (the Scottsdale burrowing crayfish),

*E. yabbimunna* (the Burnie burrowing crayfish) and

*E. martigener* (the Furneaux burrowing crayfish). All four of these species are endemic to Tasmania (Figure 1: Map of general distributions).

## Habitat

All burrowing crayfish species favour wet, muddy areas and seepages, where their burrows exhibit characteristic chimneys of pelleted soil. Particular species vary in the level of water availability and other environmental conditions that they tolerate and/or prefer. Such differences are reflected in the longitudinal ('source to mouth') and transverse ('across gully', or distance from stream/water) distribution of species along a watercourse (Suter & Richardson 1977, Horwitz *et al.* 1985, Horwitz 1986, Richardson & Horwitz 1987).

## Abundance

Burrowing crayfish can be locally abundant in any area of suitable habitat within their range. Given the unpredictable nature of habitat types within wider geographic regions and the often small seepages in which these species occur, the most reliable population estimates have been made for *E. spinicaudatus* (the species for which available habitat has been most closely documented). Over a total  $3.465 \times 10^6$  m<sup>2</sup> identified as suitable habitat, Horwitz (1991) estimated the overall population of *E. spinicaudatus* as  $1.36 - 2.67 \times 10^6$  adults, according to burrow densities and occupancies in both disturbed and undisturbed land. Richards (1997) increased the estimated available habitat for this species by 0.022 square kilometres, with the discovery of the species in a small strip of lesser quality habitat within its range. This increase was estimated to represent approximately 1000 individuals, and so does not significantly alter Horwitz's original estimate.

Estimates for *E. orramakunna*, *E. yabbimunna*, and *E. martigener* are more difficult, as these species cover larger areas which have not been surveyed at as fine a scale over their whole range. Rough population estimates can be made for these species by coupling the general density/occupancy estimates determined for *E. spinicaudatus* (Horwitz 1991) coupled with known locations and ranges, GIS-projections of available habitat, and degree of potential disturbance of that habitat as relating to tenure within each range. *Engaeus orramakunna* may vary from  $1.38 - 4.04 \times 10^6$  adults, *E. yabbimunna* from  $2.29 \times 10^5$  to  $1.65 \times 10^6$  adults, and *E. martigener* from only  $2.20 \times 10^4$  to  $1.42 \times 10^5$  adults. Given good habitat, the potential size of these *Engaeus* species colonies may therefore be quite large, despite being geographically restricted.

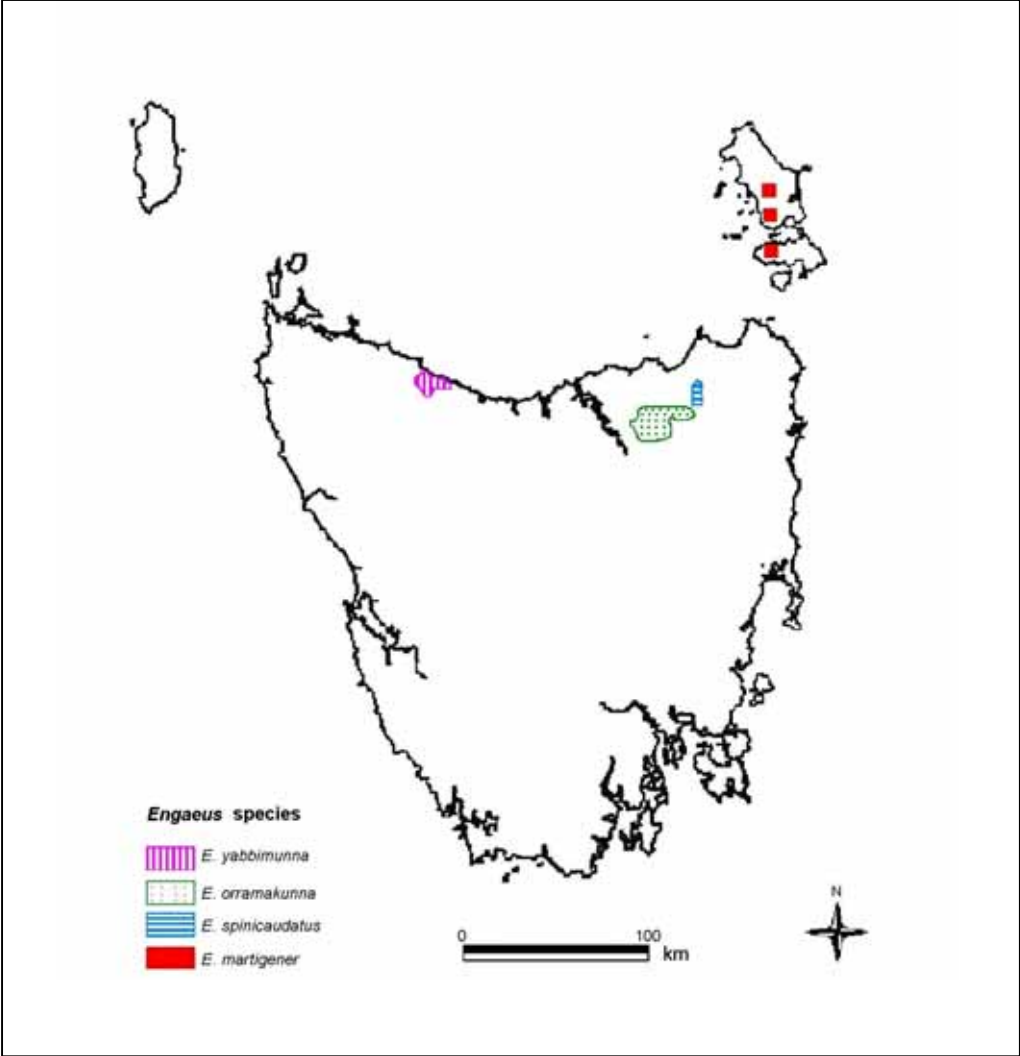


Figure 1: General distribution of threatened burrowing crayfish in Tasmania



## Life History

Relatively little is known about the life history of *Engaeus* species in general and of these four species in particular. Of the four, the most detailed information is available for *E. spinicaudatus* (as below: Horwitz 1991). The life histories of the three other species (*E. orramakunna*, *E. yabbimunna*, and *E. martigener*) are likely to follow similar patterns with minor variations between species. All may be found with varying size classes of young within their burrows, and individuals may show some degree of variation in morphological features and sexual characteristics between and within sites (Horwitz 1990a, Doran & Richards 1996, Doran 1998, unpublished data).

## Threatening Processes

The four species are of conservation concern due to their acutely restricted ranges and areas of occupancy, and the presence of actively threatening processes within these (Horwitz 1990b, 1991 & 1994, Gaffney & Horwitz 1992, Doran & Richards 1996, Doran 1998). Threatening processes particularly include those that affect water quality/quantity, and soil and food (wood/plant) availability.

These include:

- agricultural processes including stock grazing (which churns and compacts soil), dam construction, clearance of riparian vegetation and ploughing;
- forestry activities (eg clearing, burning, conversion to plantation) which impose significant mechanical disturbance on stream headwaters and seepage channels (to which crayfish may display varying degrees of tolerance);
- both agriculture and forestry may have significant effects via alteration of drainage and siltation characteristics, the application and timing of fertilisers and pesticides, and hazard reduction burning;
- high intensity fires and the consequent effects on vegetation and habitat quality;
- urban impacts, via waste management policies, waterway pollution and habitat removal;
- general roading and drainage activities (urban and non-urban) impacting on seepage/wetland/stream bank habitat quality, and any activities (eg alluvial mining) that degrade river bank integrity and enhance erosion.

While all of these impacts have the potential to affect burrowing crayfish habitat quality over the long term, crayfish are at most risk from these activities at periods when they are moulting, visiting the surface, mating or nurturing young (Horwitz 1991). It should also be noted that introduced species, such as the mainland yabby (*Cherax* spp.), might carry parasites and diseases, and may prey on or compete with native crayfish for food and habitat (Horwitz 1990b).

## Species in Detail

### ***Engaeus orramakunna***

#### ***Distribution***

The Mt. Arthur burrowing crayfish (Mt ABC), is known from a range (extent of occurrence) of approximately 300 square kilometres centred on Mt. Arthur in north-east Tasmania. Occupancy within this area is not known, but suitable habitat is common. The species extends to near Lilydale, Nabowla and South Springfield, and across this range borders on the distributions of *E. tayatea*, *E. nulloporius*, *E. mairener* and *E. leptorhynchus* (Doran & Richards 1996, Doran 1999, unpublished data). It is also found in the vicinity of Launceston, although the southern boundary to its distribution remains undefined. At its north-east extreme, *E. orramakunna* extends into an area of significant biological diversity and evolutionary importance for both burrowing crayfish and the Tasmanian fauna as a whole (Horwitz 1996).

#### ***Habitat***

*Engaeus orramakunna* prefers moist seeps and flat swampy or marshy land feeding into or next to streams and rivers, but can also be found in stream banks, wet pasture, culverts, and roadside drains (Doran & Richards 1996). The species may construct burrows in both type 2 and 3 habitats (Horwitz 1990a).

#### ***Life history***

Breeding for *E. orramakunna* may begin in late winter. Female *E. orramakunna* have been found carrying undifferentiated eggs in mid-June, early August, late October and early November (Horwitz 1990a, Doran & Richards 1996). On some of these occasions males have been found occupying the same burrow (Horwitz 1990a).

#### ***Threatening processes***

A major proportion (41%, Table 1) of the distribution of *E. orramakunna* is in State Forest, and so is subject to extensive forestry activity (the effects of which may be minimised for *E. orramakunna* within the provisions of the Forest Practices Code). In the remainder of its range the species is also subject to heavy pressure from agricultural activity on private land (approx 52%), for which no code or guidelines are in place.

#### ***Conservation status***

*Engaeus orramakunna* is currently listed as Vulnerable under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act* (1995) according to guidelines from the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). The species is also listed as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999) based on IUCN (1994) criteria. According to EFN-modified criteria for sessile species (as per Keith 1998), *E. orramakunna* satisfies the guidelines for Vulnerable under both State and Commonwealth Acts as:

- its linear range is less than 50km (Rule B);
- its extent of occurrence is less than 2000km<sup>2</sup> (Rule B);
- 90% of mature individuals occur in 10 or less populations (Criteria B1);
- there is a continuing decline or potential decline due to the operation of threatening processes throughout its range (Criteria B2).

Although *E. orramakunna* is likely to be the most secure of the four species covered by this recovery plan, there are insufficient data on the long term effects of the above threatening processes on the species. The species was identified as a Category 2 fauna species (requiring a combination of reservation and management prescription, with protection required in areas of high quality habitat) under the Tasmanian Comprehensive Regional Assessment process (Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1997). It has ultimately been identified as a Priority Species "...requiring recovery action"

under the *Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement* (Attachment 2, Part A.1) signed between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Tasmania in November 1997.

## ***Engaeus spinicaudatus***

### ***Distribution***

The Scottsdale Burrowing Crayfish (SBC), is found north of Scottsdale within an area of approximately 34.5 square kilometres, containing only 3.45 square kilometres of suitable habitat (Horwitz 1991, Gaffney & Horwitz 1992, Richards 1997). The extent of this distribution has previously been well defined (Horwitz 1991), and is unlikely to be extended further. *Engaeus spinicaudatus* is closely bounded by the distributions of *E. mairener*, *E. tayatea*, and *E. leptorhynchus*. Recent discoveries also indicate that *E. orramakunna* may be found close to the southern extent of this species (Doran, unpublished data). Given the extremely restricted distribution of *E. spinicaudatus*, the entire natural habitat in which it occurs should be considered critical habitat for the future of the species (Doran & Richards 1996).

### ***Habitat***

*Engaeus spinicaudatus* is primarily found in wet buttongrass and heathy plains (particularly with peaty and saturated soils), but also occurs in surface seepages, the floodplains of creeks (often with scrubby or taller tea-tree vegetation), wet areas converted to pasture from any of the preceding habitat types, and some creekbanks in open dry eucalypt forest (Horwitz 1991, Richards 1997). Burrows for this species tend to be type 2 (Horwitz 1990a).

### ***Life history***

Female *E. spinicaudatus* become reproductively mature once they reach an occipital carapace length (OCL) of 16.4mm, and may undergo a pre-copulatory moult (which possibly releases mating pheromones and reduces her aggressive ability). Mating occurs between mid November and late December, and may represent the only time that male crayfish will be found openly wandering on the surface (in search of female burrows). Females carry eggs and larvae through December and January, with light orange undifferentiated eggs developing early limbs and eyespots, followed by clear development of the limbs, abdomen, telson and carapace. Female *E. spinicaudatus* have been found with free young in their burrow in March (Horwitz 1990a). While a strong linear relationship exists between body size and fecundity in *E. spinicaudatus*, no information exists regarding the rate of growth, survivorship and recruitment, age, or number and frequency of breeding events (e.g. biennial or singular) for this species.

### ***Threatening processes***

Forestry and agricultural activities also provide the main threats to *E. spinicaudatus*, alongside downstream effects of road construction, quarrying and the impacts of inappropriate fire management. Hot fires pose a direct threat to the peaty soils in which *E. spinicaudatus* is found, while the absence of fire may promote successional change and eventual drying of the buttongrass communities upon them. The acute range restriction of this species makes the identification and amelioration of such impacts a priority, particularly as little of the available habitat for the species falls within reserved areas (Table 2) and although some habitat has recently been incorporated into the North Scottsdale Forest Reserve, management issues and mitigation of threatening processes have not yet been adequately resolved.

### ***Conservation status***

*Engaeus spinicaudatus* is currently listed as Endangered under both the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act* (1995) and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999) due to the restricted distribution of the species, its negligible reservation status and continued threatening processes throughout its distribution. The species satisfies the criteria for Endangered based on EFN-modified criteria for sessile species (as per Keith 1998) under both State and Commonwealth (IUCN) Acts as:

- its linear range is less than 20km (Rule B);
- its extent of occurrence is less than 500km<sup>2</sup> (Rule B);
- 90% of mature individuals occur in 5 or less populations (Criteria B1);
- there is a continuing decline or potential decline due to the operation of threatening processes throughout its range (Criteria B2);
- of the 90% of mature individuals in 5 or less populations, no populations are free of Class I threats (Criteria F1).

Due to the acute restriction of its range and large number of directly threatening processes, *E. spinicaudatus* was identified as a Category 1 fauna species (requiring protection of *all* populations and habitat within its known range) under the Tasmanian Comprehensive Regional Assessment process (Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1997). It has ultimately been identified as a Priority Species "...requiring recovery action" under the *Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement* (Attachment 2, Part A.1) signed between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Tasmania in November 1997.

## ***Engaeus yabbimunna***

### ***Distribution***

The Burnie Burrowing Crayfish (BBC) is known from an overall area of approximately 130 square kilometres covering Burnie and the area immediately to the west. The species has only been known since 1992, when it was discovered by Mr Bill Walker of the Burnie City Council within Burnie Park. Originally only known from fragmented populations on Shorewell Creek, Romaine Creek and the eastern arm of Cooe Creek within urban Burnie (Horwitz 1994, Doran & Richards 1996), the recorded distribution of the species was extended when it was found in Seabrook Creek by Mr Jim Nelson in 1998. Subsequent survey work located *E. yabbimunna* along Camp Creek, Distillery Creek, two small intervening catchments and one small tributary of the Cam River (Doran 1998). Further searching has located other *Engaeus* species in surrounding areas, but no new sites for the BBC. A large gap (at least 18 square kilometres) separates the smaller eastern (urban) and larger western (newly discovered) populations of *E. yabbimunna*, including the lower reaches of Distillery Creek, the Cam River, Messengers Creek and Cooe Creek (including the whole of the western arm). Other *Engaeus* species bordering on or within the range of *E. yabbimunna* include *E. fossor*, *E. cisternarius*, *E. cunicularius*, and *E. disjuncticus*. *Engaeus fossor* appears to dominate along the coast in these streams, and may coexist with *E. yabbimunna* where the ranges of the two species overlap (Horwitz 1994, Doran 1998).

### ***Habitat***

*Engaeus yabbimunna* prefers well-covered, slowly draining strips of fern-dominated native riparian vegetation. The species is known from stream banks and seepages retaining remnant riparian vegetation within Burnie (Horwitz 1994, Doran & Richards 1996) and outside the city, in open and grassy sheep pasture, farm dams, roadside seeps and culverts, sedgey marsh, and some moderately disturbed stream sides (Doran 1998). Burrows are often of type 2.

### ***Life history***

A large male and female *E. yabbimunna* were found together in early September (Doran 1998), at a proximity almost certainly representing courtship and mating (A. Richardson, personal communication). Large numbers of berried female *E. yabbimunna* have been found in early December, all carrying eggs in early developmental stages (Horwitz 1994). Well developed/hatching larvae have been found under the tail of *E. fossor* (in the same region as *E. yabbimunna*) in January (Doran, unpublished data).

### ***Threatening processes***

The greatest threats to *E. yabbimunna* are water pollution, water diversion and habitat removal within the urban environment. There is some evidence that a marked reduction in population size and

distribution has occurred in response to decreasing water quality and increasing urban and industrial pollution at the centre of the species' distribution. The abundance of other burrowing crayfish species also appears markedly reduced in the more polluted streams falling between the two distributions of the BBC. As with *E. spinicaudatus*, the reservation status of *E. yabbimunna* is poor (Tables 1 & 2). Given the restricted amount of good quality habitat available to this species and the limited information available on its responses to disturbance, areas where agricultural and forestry activities are in progress are also of concern.

#### **Conservation status**

*Engaeus yabbimunna* is currently listed as Vulnerable under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act* (1995) according to the guidelines from the SAC. The species is also listed as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999), based on IUCN (1994) criteria. According to EFN-modified criteria for sessile species (as per Keith 1998), *E. yabbimunna* satisfies the guidelines for Vulnerable under both State and Commonwealth Acts as:

- its linear range is less than 50km (Rule B);
- its extent of occurrence is less than 2000km<sup>2</sup> (Rule B);
- 90% of mature individuals occur in 10 or less populations (Criteria B1);
- there is a continuing decline or potential decline due to the operation of threatening processes throughout its range (Criteria B2);
- of the 90% of mature individuals in 10 or less populations, no populations are free of Class I threats and none are free of Class II threats (Criteria F1 & F2).

Due to its restricted range and the large number of directly threatening processes operating within that range, the species was identified as a Category 1 fauna species (requiring protection of *all* populations and habitat within its known range) under the Tasmanian Comprehensive Regional Assessment process (Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1997). It has ultimately been identified as a Priority Species "... requiring recovery action" under the *Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement* (Attachment 2, Part A.1) signed between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Tasmania in November 1997.

### ***Engaeus martigener***

#### ***Distribution***

The Furneaux Burrowing Crayfish (FBC), has previously only been known from isolated locations at high altitude on Mt Strzelecki on Flinders Island and Mt Munro on Cape Barren Island (Horwitz 1990a & personal communication). Recent survey work has located the species elsewhere in the Strzelecki National Park, as well as in the Darling Range on Flinders Island (Doran, unpublished data). There is a transition from *E. martigener* to *E. cunicularius* at lower altitudes. *Engaeus martigener* is clearly of very restricted distribution, although little is known of its available habitat and numbers within these three regions.

#### ***Habitat***

*Engaeus martigener* has previously only been known from boggy areas and small clear water creeks in high altitude wet ferny gullies (Horwitz 1990a, Doran & Richards 1996). These areas again appear to be the stronghold of the species, although recent survey work has also located populations at lower altitudes, and in poorly drained mossy tea-tree bog and a small grassy spring/soak in open dry eucalypt forest (Doran, unpublished data). The species occupies a type 2 burrow habitat (Horwitz 1990a).

#### ***Life history***

Reproductively active, and egg or juvenile-bearing, *E. martigener* females have been found in November and December (Horwitz 1990a). Very small juveniles have been found individually within larger burrow systems in November (Horwitz 1990a), while both similar juveniles and older, free-

swimming individuals (dispersing in surface waters) have also been found in March (Doran unpublished data).

### ***Threatening processes***

Although the reservation status of the species appears to be relatively high, potentially catastrophic processes still threaten its status. One of the greatest potential dangers to the status of *E. martigener* is the risk of wildfire. The accumulation of high levels of fuel throughout the Strzelecki National Park, and the lack of access for fire control means that high intensity burns may pose a danger to the species in the future. Although in some areas the crayfish appear able to burrow deep enough to avoid the direct effects of disturbances such as fire, long term consequences of intense or repeated burns may be catastrophic. Problems include the exposure and loss of erosion-prone granitic soils in the region, and the loss of water retention within the remaining soils of the gullies. The flora in the upper reaches of Fotheringate Creek (type locality of *E. martigener* and containing exceptional habitat for the species) has been identified as the most fire-sensitive, and persists as rainforest remnants largely due to the protection of the surrounding topography (Walsh 1999).

The efficacy of such protection, however, may be lost or reduced in periods of drought (eg Collett 1998). Similar ferny wet gullies have already been completely lost due to the combination of fire and drought on Deal Island (Doran, unpublished data), and these are unlikely to regenerate for centuries (S. Harris, personal communication). Some level of fern die-off has already been observed under current drought conditions on Flinders Island (PWS staff, Flinders Island, pers. comm.). In contrast, frequent burning of gullies on Cape Barren Island may produce a similar effect.

Forestry and agricultural issues are currently of little relevance to *E. martigener*, although this may change depending upon future decisions regarding such activities on the island, any future extensions to the known range of the species, and changes to the status of unallocated Crown land. Feral pigs have previously been identified as a potential risk to the species; while burrow depth would again appear to protect crayfish from the direct effects of such disturbance, this is also an issue that needs to be addressed.

### ***Conservation status***

*Engaeus martigener* is listed as Vulnerable under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act* (1995) and as Endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999). The species satisfies the Vulnerable classification based on EFN-modified criteria for sessile species (as per Keith 1998) under both Acts as:

- its linear range is less than 50km (Rule B);
- its extent of occurrence is less than 2000km<sup>2</sup> (Rule B);
- its area of occupancy is less than 50 ha (Rule B);
- 90% of mature individuals occur in 10 or less populations (Criteria B1);
- there is a potential continuing decline due to the operation of threatening processes within its range (Criteria B2);
- it occurs in 5 or less populations (Criteria D2).

Given the poor distributional data available for this species, it currently also satisfies the criteria for Endangered under both Acts, as evidenced by its conservation status at the Commonwealth level. Further distributional work needs to be conducted to confirm that an Endangered classification is not required and that Vulnerable is more appropriate.

The species has not previously received any management attention, but due to the acute restriction of its range and the presence of potentially threatening processes (also operating within newly discovered parts of its range), it is now recognised as a species requiring recovery action. Such action can be effectively combined with the management required by the other *Engaeus* species covered in this plan.

**Table 1: Approximate Tenure Breakdown of Total Distributional Area (Extent of Occurrence) of Relevant Species**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Mt ABC %</b>	<b>SBC %</b>	<b>BBC %</b>	<b>FBC</b>
Cons res	1.29	6.59	0.01	Unkn
NC res	0.17	0.77	4.64	Unkn
Public	5.31	15.23	0.09	Unkn
SF	41.46	51.60	3.57	Unkn
Private	51.77	25.80	91.69	Unkn
<b>Total (ha)</b>	29 910	3465	8 218	Unkn

**Table 2: Approximate Tenure Breakdown of Estimated Available Habitat (Potential Area of Occupancy) of Relevant Species**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Mt ABC %</b>	<b>SBC %</b>	<b>BBC %</b>	<b>FBC</b>
Cons res	0.98	3.33	0	Unkn
NC res	0.50	0	3.92	Unkn
Public	6.34	18.71	0.21	Unkn
SF	26.43	39.22	4.36	Unkn
Private	65.75	38.74	91.51	Unkn
<b>Total (ha)</b>	797	390	258	Unkn

Cons res = conservation reserves

NC Res = non-conservation reserves

Public = other public land (including unallocated Crown land)

SF = state forest

Private = private land

## Existing Conservation Measures for all Species

The conservation status and potential threatening processes for these four species were identified by Horwitz (1990b, 1994). *Engaeus spinicaudatus* has subsequently received specific attention in two studies (Horwitz 1991, Gaffney & Horwitz 1992), while background information and draft management prescriptions were compiled for all four species during the Tasmanian RFA process (Doran & Richards 1996). Follow up work has added further information on the distribution and status of *E. spinicaudatus* (Richards 1997), *E. yabbimunna* (Doran 1998), *E. orramakunna* (Doran 1999), and *E. martigener* (Doran, unpublished data).

While *E. orramakunna* and *E. spinicaudatus* are known to occur within some large formal reserves (Doran & Richards 1996), *E. yabbimunna* is not. Similarly, although *E. martigener* is found within an existing National Park, the percentage of its distribution in formal reserves is completely unknown.

All species except *E. martigener* are currently incorporated in a notification and conservation prescription system established by the Forest Practices Board (FPB) and the Threatened Species Unit (TSU) to advise forestry operations within sensitive areas. Forestry operations in areas affecting these crayfish species have been successfully modified in consultation with landholders, forestry operators, the FPB and the TSU. Long-term monitoring programs have begun on these species to provide feedback information on the effectiveness of conservation measures currently in place.

While no specific regulations govern agricultural, industrial, civic or other processes threatening these species, initiatives have been undertaken to increase awareness of them and their conservation requirements. Landowners have been contacted to make them aware of the species and to ascertain their plans and attitudes towards the land in question, and work has been undertaken towards establishing management agreements and covenants on relevant private land.

Contact has been made with representatives of relevant Councils (Burnie, Dorset) regarding specific developments and their interests and concerns in the protection of these species. Issues relating to *Engaeus martigener* have been included within the draft management plan for the Strzelecki National Park (Walsh 1999), and the presence of the species has been noted as a potential issue for the future development of unallocated Crown land on Flinders Island (Artemis Publishing Consultants 1999).

Public awareness of these species has also been raised through school and community talks and a series of magazine, press and newsletter articles at local, state and national levels. School projects conducted under permit on *Engaeus yabbimunna* have won one Burnie school a place in the University of Sydney Eureka Schools Prize for Biological Sciences, and have led to a student from this college being selected as the first ever Australian representative in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. This student has travelled to Sweden to present a talk on this species, its habitat and threats, thereby raising awareness of *E. yabbimunna* at an international level.



## Strategy for Recovery

**The Recovery Plan covers a five year period. The overall aim of the plan is to manage habitat in the ranges of the relevant species, in order to:**

- maintain or improve water availability (especially in seepages);
- maintain or improve water quality (against pollutants, pesticides);
- maintain or improve habitat (native riparian vegetation and soil integrity);
- exclude disruptive processes from sensitive areas (seepages/marshes/streamside areas)
- increase the reservation/protection of these species on Crown and private land
- increase public awareness and appreciation of, and involvement in, threatened species protection.

**Eight primary strategies underlie the actions described in the plan. They are:**

1. assessment of habitat
2. improvement of reservation status
3. habitat management: agriculture
4. habitat management: forestry and commercial harvesting
5. habitat management: urban and other land managers
6. community involvement and education
7. population and habitat monitoring
8. organisational support.

## Recovery Objectives & Criteria

The long term objective is to reduce the impact of threatening processes upon the four species, to improve their reservation status and to increase our understanding of them in order to avoid the need to upgrade their status to more critical IUCN (1994) conservation categories.

The objectives of this recovery plan and the criteria for successfully achieving them are:

<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<b>Criteria for Success</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Improve habitat protection for each species.	Improved security for each species through land acquisition or reservation, improved land use techniques and management agreements with landholders and forestry, agricultural and urban or public stakeholders.	1. Assessment of habitat. 2. Improvement of reservation status. 3-5. Habitat management with relevant groups.
Increase public awareness and involvement in threatened species protection.	Increased public awareness of these species and involvement in or willingness to be involved in conservation related programs.	6. Community involvement and education.
Ensure each species persists long-term throughout its area of occupancy.	Each species measured at selected monitoring sites indicates overall stability or long-term increase in populations or range.	7. Population and habitat monitoring, combined with the results of actions 1-6 (as above).

# Recovery Actions

The actions in this recovery plan are based on current knowledge of the biology and ecology of these burrowing crayfish species. Management requirements have been based on the recommendations of Doran & Richards (1996), augmented with subsequent work in support of the current plan. Actions will need to be reassessed as knowledge improves.

## Action 1. Assessment of Habitat

### 1.1 Assessment of habitat for *E. martigener*

Before recovery actions can be effectively implemented on these species, proper assessment of their distribution and the quantity, quality and long-term security of their available habitat needs to be undertaken. Such information will allow modelling of these species, and predictions of the level of habitat loss that can be sustained for each according to habitat type and tenure.

Distribution mapping is nearly complete for *E. orramakunna*, *E. spinicaudatus* and *E. yabbimunna*, but has not been undertaken for *E. martigener*. Given the significant degree of high-intensity fire risk posed for this species and its habitat, it is therefore a priority that detailed survey work of the Strzelecki Park, Darling Range, the Mt Munro and Mt Kerford regions (and other likely areas) is undertaken *prior* to any significant fire event passing through these areas (Abbott 1984). Subsequent survey and census work should also be conducted in the aftermath of serious burns within these areas. Ideally, such data should be collected over a number of years pre and post-fire to ensure that valid assessments can be made (Campbell & Tanton 1981, Majer 1985, Friend 1995).

A draft management plan for the Strzelecki National Park has recently identified the protection of *E. martigener* and its habitat as a priority for the park, and identifies the collection of distributional information and addressing other data gaps as key actions of future management (Walsh 1999). It should be noted that adequate care and precautions should be taken during such work, given the access required to isolated areas, the potential to transport muddy material between these areas, and the current problems regarding cinnamon fungus disease (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) within and surrounding both the Strzelecki Park (Walsh 1999) and the Darling Ranges (Artemis Publishing Consultants 1999).

As recovery and management actions for *E. martigener* can only be effectively established once the range and abundance of the species and the quality and quantity of habitat in which it is found are known, field surveys and mapping need to be undertaken on Flinders Island and Cape Barren Island. Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer and a Technical Assistant, field equipment, travel allowances and vehicle costs (including air and sea transport to remote areas on both islands). Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment are included.

### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	45 300					45 300

## 1.2 Assessment of habitat for *E. orramakunna*, *E. spinicaudatus* and *E. yabbimunna*

A short period of survey work is required to finalise a management overview of the distribution and habitat types occupied by the remaining three species, and to determine the degree of management or protection required for these habitat components. In particular, this work will focus on:

- the north-east corner and southern extremes of *E. orramakunna* (where the species is exposed to increasing agricultural, forestry and, potentially, urban development);
- any further potential areas of suitable habitat within or near the range of *E. spinicaudatus*, particularly Crown land (which may be more readily protected and reserved); and
- the distribution of *E. yabbimunna* around the Cam River catchment (a major catchment subjected to heavy industrial and urban development in its lower waters, and increasing forestry activity in its upper waters).

Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer and a Technical Assistant, field equipment, travel allowances and vehicle costs. Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment are included.

### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	14 400					14 400

## Action 2. Improvement of Reservation Status

*Engaeus spinicaudatus* and *E. yabbimunna* in particular are of poor reservation status. None of the listed *Engaeus* species are recognised as receiving adequate protection by management prescription, reservation, or "existing mechanisms" (*Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement* 1997; Attachment 2, Parts A.2 & A.3). Inter-agency discussions need to be held through this plan and other mechanisms to identify potential areas for the reservation of these species. This issue is critical for *E. spinicaudatus* and *E. yabbimunna*. Several previous recommendations have listed increased reservation for *E. spinicaudatus* as a priority (Horwitz 1991, Gaffney & Horwitz 1992, Doran & Richards 1996). Inclusion of *E. spinicaudatus* habitat within the North Scottsdale Forest Reserve has increased the reservation status of the species but until management issues are resolved its status remains precarious.

It will be necessary to assess and prioritise specific Crown, public and private land and general areas within the relevant catchments for both formal and informal reservation. Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer, field equipment, travel allowances and vehicle costs, as well as the purchase, inducement, covenant or compensation and ongoing management of land involved. Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment are included.

### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	67 600	79 900	79 900			227 400

### Action 3. Habitat Management: Agriculture

In consultation with landholders, it is planned to develop both general and specific voluntary guidelines for the protection of these species on agricultural land. These guidelines would be based on the prescriptions successfully developed and implemented in conjunction with the forestry industry, but would be tailored to the farm environment (as per Doran 1999). The guidelines would aim to alleviate agricultural impacts on crayfish species (through cattle trampling, dam construction, riparian clearing, and other activities) without imposing on normal farm productivity and operation. This will be achieved by recruiting landholders who are interested in working with the Threatened Species Unit to develop both a general voluntary agricultural code (which could also have larger scale and more general benefits for riparian habitats as a whole) as well as specific prescriptions and rehabilitation techniques for particular situations and farms. Where possible, such guidelines will be fitted within larger scale strategies that are being developed to manage agricultural activities, and will in turn make reference to such major developments as the Summer Rains program.

An impact assessment of existing agricultural activities will be conducted throughout the range of each species, and appropriate conservation strategies will be discussed, developed and implemented with affected agricultural stakeholders. Part of this action will involve trialing modified agricultural practices (eg partial rehabilitation of selected stream and dam sides) to determine how effectively they will continue to meet farm operational requirements while improving habitat quality for the crayfish and related fauna. Depending upon the management and operational needs of specific farms, guidelines and rehabilitation could include: the retention or re-establishment of riparian strips or habitat clumps; the relocation of sensitive species prior to the undertaking of significant works; incorporation of 'species friendly' aspects to the design of farms dams and other significant works; reduction of siltation characteristics and enhancement of seepages; the introduction of fencing and other limitations of cattle/livestock access to sections of creek and dam banks; and minimisation of chemical and pesticide drift into creeks, dams and surrounding areas.

As with the developing forestry prescriptions outlined below, many of these modifications to existing farm practices could, ultimately, be incorporated into such works in future with minimal inconvenience to the landholder. Other modification/rehabilitation work may have to be conducted separately or subsequent to such works. As these would potentially involve significant additional cost, they could be supported through the recovery program by targeting key catchments and properties, and by interacting with receptive landholders prepared to volunteer their land. Individuals and community groups have already indicated their interest in becoming involved with this work.

Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer, field equipment, rehabilitation inducements and trials, travel allowances and vehicle costs. Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment are included.

#### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	11 700	41 600	41 600			94 900

NB: These costs do not incorporate Council, volunteer or community time.

#### Action 4. Habitat Management: Forestry and Commercial Harvesting

The generic and specific guidelines developed for commercial and non-commercial forestry activities in areas containing these species need to be evaluated and refined. Depending on individual situations, these guidelines have included combinations of the following: enhanced buffer strip sizes beyond those standard for the Forest Practices Code and increased protection of native riparian vegetation; buffer sizes individually tailored to specific situations where required; re-establishment of native riparian and understorey vegetation in areas where it has previously been lost; exclusion of machinery, site preparation, planting's and pesticide/fertiliser application from identified and important pre-class 4 drainage lines; spot and sub-surface pesticide/fertiliser application near sensitive seepage areas; the type of pesticide/fertiliser chosen to minimise potential harm to crayfish species, with the timing of application avoiding periods of crayfish activity and increased runoff; operations conducted with particular care regarding maintenance of water quality and availability in waterways; all landings and crossings constructed with maximum care regarding stream bank and bed damage; and disturbance avoided in any areas where burrows are visible.

Such co-operative development has so far been successful, with initial indications that *E. orramakunna* is well protected by the general provisions of the Forest Practices Code (Doran & Richards 1996). Given the large percentage of the range of this species that is subject to forestry activity, however, long term monitoring of populations in plantation and native forest areas should be established and continued pre- and post-harvest.

The impacts of forestry activities on *E. spinicaudatus* and *E. yabbimunna* are less well known and also require attention. The different habitat and burrow types occupied by *E. spinicaudatus* may leave the species more prone to the effects of forestry activities (Horwitz 1991), while the restricted range of *E. yabbimunna* combined with limited availability of good quality forested habitat and the lack of records of the species in harvested areas demands that it be treated with caution until more information is available. Successful development and implementation of conservation prescriptions additional to the Forest Practices Code (as recently devised in consultation between the TSU, the FPB and private forestry concerns) also need to be encouraged and evaluated.

Impact assessment of existing commercial and non-commercial forestry works will be conducted throughout the range of each species. Agreements for the long-term management of these species will then be discussed, developed and implemented with the FPB, Forestry Tasmania and private forestry stakeholders. Where possible, these agreements will be integrated within agreed broader scale operational management strategies, including ongoing monitoring of long term survey sites.

Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer, field equipment, travel allowances and vehicle costs. Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, and the Forest Practices Board are included.

Most of the costs of this action will be incurred in long-term monitoring (Action 7). Habitat management costs should be negligible as these can be implemented through existing FPB/TSU mechanisms and through the education and monitoring protocols below.

#### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	11 800	23 400	23 400			58 600

## Action 5. Habitat Management: Urban and Other Land Managers

Urban impacts mainly affect *E. yabbimunna*, although some Council-related issues (e.g. road and drain construction, stream and river rehabilitation) also affect the other species. In addition, relevant land management issues may affect Councils and regulating bodies in control of reserves and non-urban areas.

The Recovery Plan aims to both increase awareness of these species within the relevant Councils and to work with these Councils to develop appropriate management guidelines for their respective regions. An impact assessment of habitat change due to urban zoning and development will be conducted, and appropriate conservation strategies to alleviate these changes and associated pressures will be discussed, developed and implemented with affected urban stakeholders and other relevant land managers. Part of this work will involve community involvement and education, as below (6).

Works will range from small scale alterations to stream bank characteristics to larger scale programs addressing streamside revegetation and water quality. These actions would specifically target the rehabilitation of streams within urban Burnie, by developing a program with the Burnie City Council to address water quality/pollution issues and promote native streamside revegetation. The value of these crayfish to the Burnie community will also be promoted: they provide a reliable indicator of water quality, with corresponding biodiversity and community benefits; they are cheaper and provide a longer-term measure of such conditions than corresponding single-point chemical tests; and they have already brought national and international recognition to the city through the award of student prizes. Individuals and community groups have already indicated their interest in becoming involved with this work.

Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer, field equipment, revegetation and rehabilitation trials, travel allowances, vehicle costs and community group support. Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment are included.

### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	16 100	40 600	40 600			97 300

NB: These costs do not incorporate Council, volunteer or community time.

## Action 6. Community Involvement and Education

The interest and involvement of the community is a vital component in the ongoing protection of these species, and individuals and community groups have already indicated their willingness to become involved with this work. The Recovery Plan will aim to maintain increasing levels of public exposure to burrowing crayfish, and will actively promote community participation in their protection.

Improved interpretation of threatened species has been highlighted as a priority for the Strzelecki National Park (Walsh 1999) and increased public awareness and education has previously been recommended for Tasmania's burrowing crayfish species (Doran & Richards 1996). Information on the species, their habitat requirements and their relevance to environmental health will be distributed to and made as accessible as possible to landholders, industry, schools, community groups and individuals. This information will highlight what can be done to improve habitat and waterway quality, and will be updated to promote the successes that are achieved in all areas of this plan (including forestry, agricultural and civic actions, and the community involvement incorporated within these). The benefits of protecting these species and their environment will also be promoted, alongside their positive profile for threatened species in general - given that their conservation requirements are relatively easily met with little to no deleterious effect on production crops or other agricultural, industrial or civic needs.

Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer, equipment and trials, travel allowances, vehicle costs, and community group and educational support. Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment are included.

#### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	13 300	13 300	13 300	6 400	6 400	52 700

NB: These costs do not incorporate Council, volunteer or community time.

### Action 7. Population and Habitat Monitoring

Long term monitoring will need to be conducted on these species in order to determine the efficacy of recovery actions. Additional and concurrent investigations on the ecology of these species will provide further information on population structures, including survival, recruitment and dispersal rates, which can be used to further refine the recovery strategy. The effects of fire on both *E. martigener* and *E. spinicaudatus* need to be determined, and provision for these species may need to be incorporated into fire management strategies developed by the relevant authorities.

In support of the actions outlined in (3), (4) and (5), established long term monitoring sites for *E. orramakunna*, *E. spinicaudatus*, and *E. yabbimunna* will continue to be sampled to provide base-line information on their responses to threatening processes and varying levels of protection or remedial action over time. Continued monitoring of these sites will require relatively little input in terms of resources or time.

The identification of long term monitoring sites for *E. martigener* needs to wait until the range of the species is determined and types of available sites are known (as per 1.1 above). Given the cost of reaching field sites on Flinders Island, it is possible that any monitoring may be undertaken by field staff on the island, or that monitoring can be incorporated within future faunal considerations highlighted in the management plan for the park (Parks & Wildlife Service 2000). One of the objectives of the Strzelecki National Park plan is to "*protect, maintain and monitor threatened fauna species, in particular the swift parrot, burrowing crayfish, and New Holland mouse... to protect, maintain and monitor the diversity of indigenous fauna and habitat...[and] to minimise harmful impacts on indigenous fauna and habitats*". Other relevant aspects of the Strzelecki National Park management plan include policies for the control of wildfire and feral pigs.

Endangered Species Program funds are required to cover the salary of a Scientific Officer, field assistance, equipment, travel allowances and vehicle costs. Contributions from the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, and the Forest Practices Board are included.

#### Costs (\$1,000's)

Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Cost	20 400	23 400	23 400	23 400	23 400	114 000





## Implementation Schedule

Task	Task Description	Priority	Feasibility	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
<b>1. Assessment of Habitat</b>									
1.1	Assessment of habitat for <i>E. martigener</i>	1	100%	45.3					45.3
1.2	Assessment of habitat for <i>E. orramakunna</i> , <i>E. spinicaudatus</i> and <i>E. yabbimunna</i>	2	100%	14.4					14.4
									<b>59.7</b>
<b>2 Improvement of Reservation Status</b>									
				67.6	79.9	79.9			227.4
									<b>227.4</b>
<b>3 Habitat Management: Agriculture</b>									
				11.7	41.6	41.6			94.9
									<b>94.9</b>
<b>4 Habitat Management: Forestry and Commercial Harvesting</b>									
				11.8	23.4	23.4			58.6
<b>5 Habitat Management: Urban and Other Land Managers</b>									
				16.1	40.6	40.6			97.3
									<b>97.3</b>
<b>6 Community Involvement and Education</b>									
				13.3	13.3	13.3	6.4	6.4	52.7
									<b>52.7</b>
<b>7 Population and Habitat Monitoring</b>									
				20.4	23.4	23.4	23.4	23.4	114.0
									<b>114.0</b>
<b>8 Organisational Support</b>									
8.1	Burrowing Crayfish Recovery Officer	1	100%	41.6	34.0	34.0	8.0	8.0	125.6
8.2	Recovery Team	1	100%	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.0
									<b>127.6</b>
<b>Total</b>				242.6	256.6	256.6	38.2	38.2	<b>832.2</b>

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