

Parasites and fouling organisms of redclaw crayfish in Queensland.

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The commercial culture of freshwater crayfish is an expanding industry in many states of Australia. The species *Cherax quadricarinatus* (commonly known as redclaw) is cultured throughout Queensland and has shown good growth characteristics, low aggression and limited burrowing behaviour. Little is known about production-limiting diseases of redclaw therefore a systematic survey was undertaken of cultured and wild redclaw populations for the presence of endoparasites and epibiotic fouling organisms. Macroscopically, a range of temnocephalan flatworms (notably *Craspedella* and *Diceratocephala* spp.) were detected browsing over the carapace and brachial chambers of redclaw, some species attaching large numbers of eggs over the external surfaces leading to an unsightly appearance.

Microscopically, large numbers of peritrichous ciliates were detected attached to external surfaces (especially *Cothurnia* and *Vorticella* spp.) and gill filaments (*Lagenophrys* spp.). The prevalence of epibiotic fouling organisms is thought to be related to poor water quality of ponds, particularly nutrient enrichment resulting in bacterial blooms.