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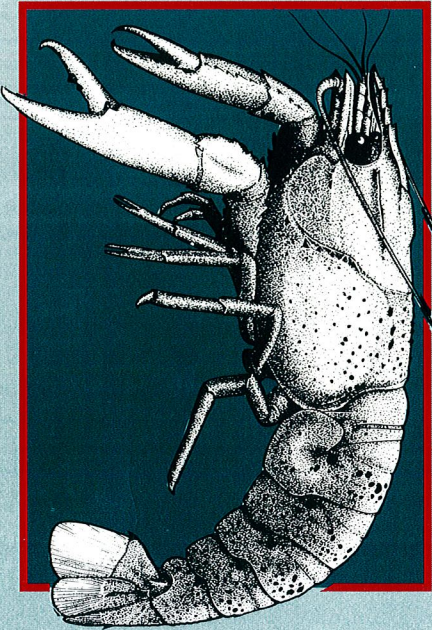
Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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## in Western Australia



# MARRON FISHING

**M**arron are the largest  
freshwater crayfish native to  
south-west of W.A.

Since first settlement country folk have held that the sweet flesh and delicate flavour of marron are a true bushman's feast.

For many city dwellers a taste of freshly cooked marron, against the backdrop of a warm summer's night and the whispering jarrah forest, is the highlight of their holiday.

West Australians are uniquely privileged to be able to enjoy the experience of marroning - the sale of marron caught in the wild has been banned since the 1950s, and only recreational fishing is now permitted.

Every year over 20,000 West Australians take out a recreational fishing licence from the Fisheries Department to fish for marron.

This brochure is your guide to the fishing rules that conserve marron breeding stocks. Information is current at October 1991, but may change at later dates.

Marron are a wild animal, and an important part of native ecosystems. They take four or more years to reach the legal size and are highly vulnerable to over fishing.

In 1987 marron catches dropped dramatically after several years of poor rainfall, and widespread disregard of fishing rules. The fishing season was completely closed for two years to allow stocks to recover.

New gear specifications and a shorter fishing season, which opens after the main breeding time for marron, were introduced to try and prevent marron stocks from dropping so disastrously again.

Every West Australian also needs to take responsibility for helping to conserve marron. This unique and important recreational fishery will only survive if you are prepared to look after it.

Fisheries Officers will be on patrol throughout the South-West during the fishing season to watch the fishery, and help with any questions you may have.

Please remember that all nature reserves are closed to fishing.

Put back the little ones, put your fires out and take your garbage away with you.

The Fisheries Department wishes you a good marron season.



Published by  
**FISHERIES DEPARTMENT  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Mandurah District Office  
15 Leslie St. Ph (09) 535 1240  
Tel. (09) 220 5333

Bunbury District Office  
Stirling St. Ph (097) 21 2598

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Fisheries officers are always glad to help. If you

have any questions about marron fishing or the

management of W.A.'s valuable fish resources

contact your nearest district Fisheries Office (listed

in the W.A. country telephone book) or:

**FISHERIES DEPARTMENT OF WA**

108 Adelaide Terrace, East Perth 6004.

Tel. (09) 220 5333

Mandurah District Office

15 Leslie St. Ph (09) 535 1240

Tel. (09) 220 5333

Bunbury District Office

Stirling St. Ph (097) 21 2598

### Join the research volunteers

The Fisheries Research Division monitors marron stock levels and catches with the help of volunteers.

Volunteers keep records of their marron catches and

fishing trips in log books supplied by the

Department. This information is returned to the

Freshwater Research Unit for analysis.

We are looking for more people who marron

regularly to help with this program. If you would like

to offer your assistance in this important project

contact:

**Cliff Fellows**

Fisheries Research Division

WA Marine Research Laboratories

PO Box 20, North Beach 6020

Ph (09) 246 8444

### Look after the forest

Our inland forest waters are some of the most beautiful scenic areas in W.A. Plastics, beer cans, and old bait don't enhance their attractions.

Look after this unique environment. Carry a garbage bag with you as part of your normal fishing gear, and take out everything you take in.

Make sure all fires are properly extinguished before leaving, and listen for fire danger warnings or fire bans on local radio.

## There's room for everyone

Marroning is a special experience for West Australians - not just for the sake of the catch.

Going marroning is a traditional outing for groups of family and friends. It is a chance to enjoy a pleasant summer evening in the bush, and share a feed of one of the world's most delicious crustaceans - fresher than you can get it in the finest restaurant.

It is also a chance to leave behind the noise, traffic, crowds, pollution, cities, and employment pressures that are part of our everyday life.

All marron fishers need to help look after the quality of this experience, as well as the marron stocks.

Staking out hundreds of metres of riverbank or dam shoreline as your "territory" when there are other people who want to go fishing is not only un-Australian, it flies in the face of what recreational fishing is all about.

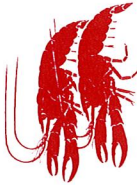
Nobody owns either the shoreline, the water, or the marron. They are a community resource, looked after with taxpayers money.

Help make this marron season an enjoyable one, and give everyone a fair go at catching a feed.

## MARRON CONSERVATION IS CATCHING

### MARRON FISHING CALENDAR 1992

Season opens and  
closes 12.00 noon



JANUARY							FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4							1
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29

#### Bag and size limits

*Minimum legal size:* 76 mm carapace length (see overleaf). Females carrying eggs ("berried") and undersize marron must be returned to the water immediately (within 2 minutes).

*Bag limit:* 20 marron per licence holder per day.

#### Open season 1992

Opens midday, Saturday, 4 January 1992

Closes midday, Saturday, 29 February 1992.

#### Legal fishing gear

Use one of these methods only. Make sure your gear meets legal specifications (see overleaf).

*Drop nets:* 6 per person. Nets must have "marron mesh" bases.

*Scoop net* (wire basket "crab" scoop): 1 per person. Fine mesh scoop nets are no longer permitted.

*Snare:* 1 bushman's pole snare per person.

#### Boats and diving

Using boats or diving gear to catch marron is illegal.

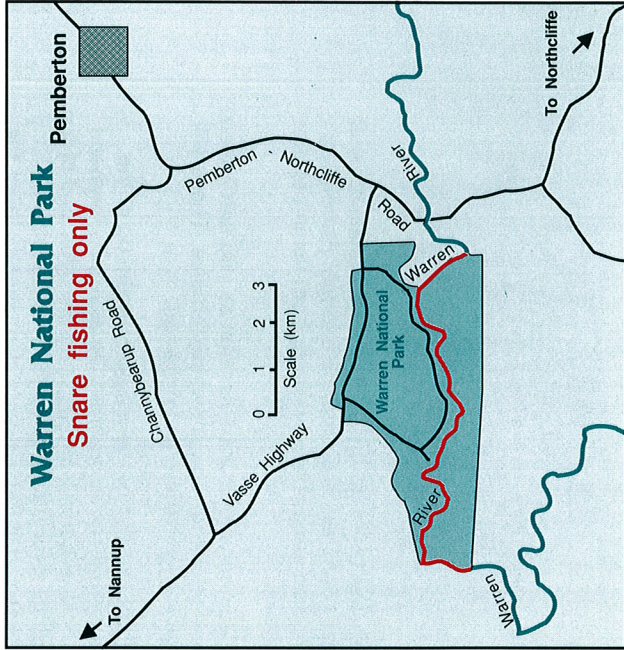
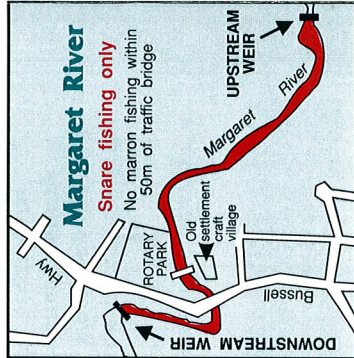
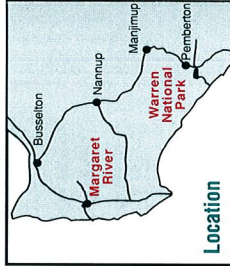
## TEST YOUR SKILL WITH A SNARE

Fishing for marron with a bushman's pole snare is one of the most challenging methods of catching marron.

Test your stealth and reflexes and you might snare a record.

Three special areas have been set aside for snare fishing only.

These are the Warren River within Warren National Park, the Shannon River downstream of Shannon Dam, and the Margaret River between the Bussell Highway.





# A FEW MARRON FACTS

Marron (*Cherax tenuimanus*) are one of over 100 species of freshwater crayfish native to Australia. At the time of European settlement they were only found in permanent fresh water between the Leschenault Inlet, near Bunbury, and the Kent River, near Walpole.

Since then the range of marron has been considerably extended by marroning enthusiasts "seeding" waters as far afield as Geraldton and Esperance.

Adult marron are usually jet black, but range to red-brown. Even cobalt blue and bright red marron have been found.

Marron take four or more years to reach the legal size of 76mm carapace length. In dams marron tend to grow faster than marron in rivers.

In rivers there is a higher survival rate of young marron, and increased competition for food slows their growth rate.

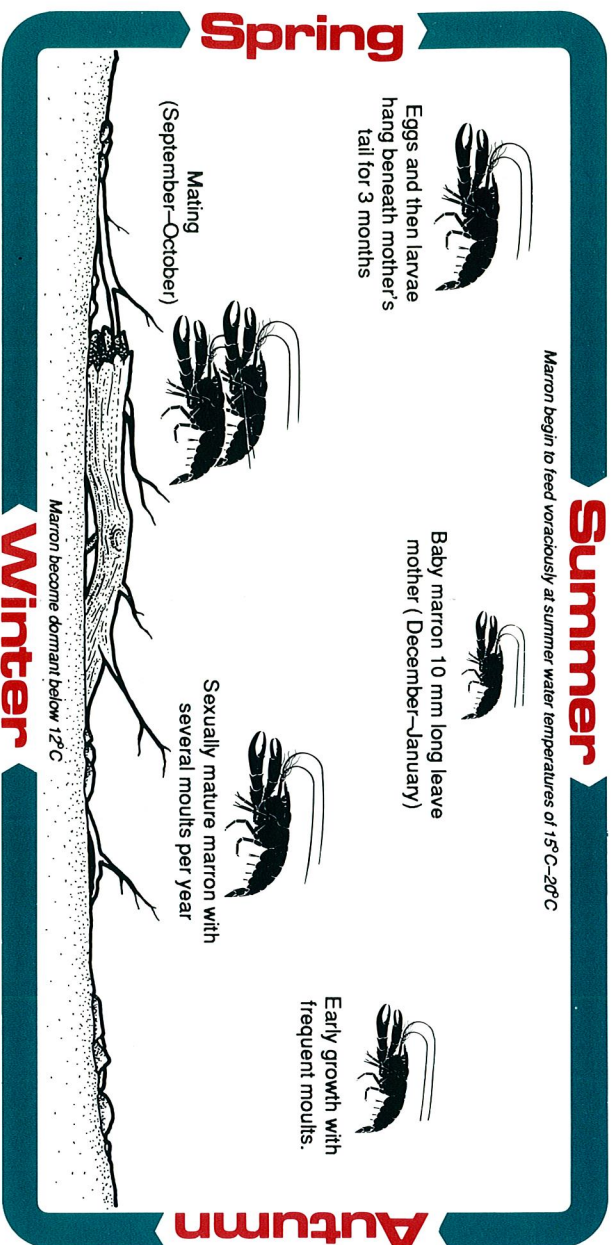
Marron eat almost anything. Plant matter, animal droppings, aquatic plants, dead or live animals and

fish, and other smaller marron are all fair game for a big marron on the forage.

Marron also play an important role in processing the forest litter that falls into rivers. What they don't eat straight away gets shredded into small particles which, after bacterial enrichment, become the detritus that forms their main natural food. Forest rivers which carry large quantities of detritus support very high weights of marron per unit area.

Marron mate and produce eggs in spring, during September and October when water temperatures begin to rise. Fertilised eggs are carried in a mass underneath the female's tail. The eggs usually hatch between October and November and the marron larvae hang head downwards under their mother's tail, clinging to the fine hairs on her swimmerets by small hooks on their last two pairs of legs.

The tiny marron are usually ready to fend for themselves by December or January, and hide in their thousands in the forest litter of the river beds, their colours camouflaging them from predators.



## LEGAL MARRON GEAR

The only legal gear for catching marron are drop nets, wire basket "crab" scoop nets, and pole snares. You may use only these methods only. Gear must meet the following specifications.

### Drop nets

(Maximum six per person)  
Upper hoop maximum diameter 650mm, minimum 400mm.

The base of the net must be made out of "marron mesh". Marron mesh is rectangular, rigid wire or plastic mesh. Each individual mesh rectangle must be a minimum of 80mm x 32mm. The wire or plastic may be no more than 5mm thick. Marron mesh is available from major tackle shops.

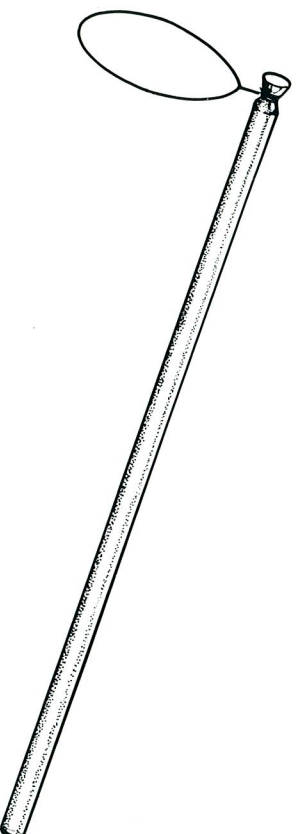
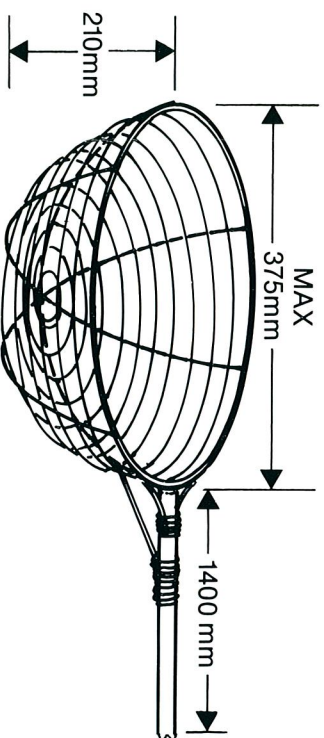
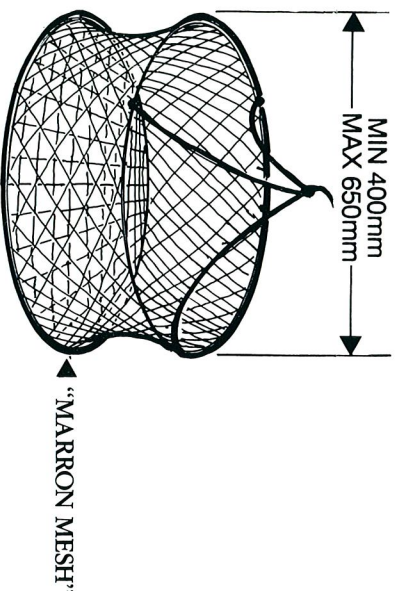
Before buying new marron nets check that they meet these specifications.

### Scoop nets

(Maximum one per person)  
Marron scoop nets are wire crabbing-style scoops with a maximum diameter of 375mm across the top hoop, and a maximum depth of 210mm. Fine-mesh dab nets are no longer legal gear for catching marron. There must be no more than six vertical support wires and a maximum of 75 individual mesh rectangles. Maximum handle length is 1400mm.

### Bushman's pole snares

(Maximum one per person)  
Pole snares are usually a broomstick, with noose made out of fine copper wire tied around one end. Pole snaring is the most exciting and skillful way to catch marron, particularly big ones.



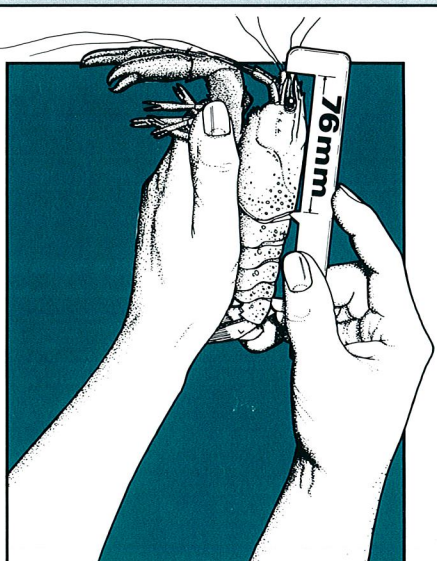
## HOW TO MEASURE A MARRON

Always use a gauge. Rulers, tape-measures and beer cans are not accurate enough! Aluminium marron gauges are available from fishing tackle shops.

Measure your marron as soon as you catch them and check for any spawning females. These will have egg clusters under the tail.

Place the end of the gauge over the tip of the horn that sticks out from the marron's forehead ("rostral horn"), and try to fit the other end of the gauge over the back edge of the marron's carapace. If the gauge is even slightly loose the marron is too small.

Put undersize marron and spawning females back into the water quickly and gently so they can grow for another season.



## Fishing for marron in dams

Some of the most popular marron fishing areas are the irrigation dams and major rivers of the jarrah and karri forests. Fishing is not permitted in dams that supply drinking water. Check with the Water Authority of WA if in doubt.

Eight of the major dams and their feeder streams in the jarrah forest have been declared "marron waters", because of the large marron populations they support, and their popularity as fishing areas.

As well as the usual rules, some special marron conservation rules apply in these areas.

Within 50 metres of the waterline of these "marron waters" all fishing nets must meet the legal specifications for marron gear.

If you are angling with a rod and line you may have a short-handled (0.5 m) trout landing net near the water.

### "MARRON WATERS"

Waroona Dam	Big Brook Dam
Samson Dam	Stirling Dam
Drakesbrook Dam	and all its feeder streams
Logue Brook Dam	Harvey Weir
Glen Mervyn Dam	and all its feeder streams
	Wellington Dam
	and all its feeder streams

## Look after your catch

Marron should always be cooked live. Dead marron go bad very rapidly. Keep your marron alive in a shaded, damp sack until you are ready to cook them. They will stay alive much longer this way than in a bucket of water, which rapidly becomes polluted and suffocates the marron.

Don't overcook your marron. Drop the marron into boiling water, salted to taste, bring back to the boil and simmer for about five minutes. Serve with fresh crusty bread and butter, and vinegar for a real bush feast.

Marron, like most seafood, are best fresh. Cooked marron, frozen whole in the shell, keep well and retain their texture, but uncooked ("green") marron tend to lose texture and flavour if frozen.