

ELUSIVE KOONAC

During August, the Harvey Shire Council grader was levelling the crown of a well used gravel road between Harvey and the coast.

Hon. Wildlife Officer R. Coughran was following the machine, clearing small boulders which the grader blade had dragged to the surface. One such boulder had uncovered a healthy Koonac (approximately 14 cms in length) which had apparently dug itself into the hard clay alongside the rock in the centre of the road.

Koonacs (a species of Freshwater Crayfish), are similar to Marron but generally smaller and more rare. They are identified by four ill-defined keels on the back of the head plus a mat of fine hairs contained on the upper surface of the hand. There are no central spines on the surface of the telson (tail fan). Koonacs are found in the inland headwaters of rivers and in swamps which habitually dry up. They appear to be capable of surviving for several years under drought conditions by burrowing.

This fellow was no exception, but in the meantime he must have led a charmed life.