

THE AUSTRALIAN FRESHWATER PRAWNS OF THE FAMILY PALAEMONIDAE

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(Figures 1–11.)

The freshwater species of this family are found in the permanent waters of creeks and rivers and to a less extent of dams and waterholes. In the small standing water one is more likely to find prawns of the family Atyidae. The species appear to have a peculiar distribution in Australia. The dominant genus *Macrobrachium* occurs throughout northern Australia and inland Australia south into South Australia where there is at least one coastal species. It is apparently absent from south-west Western Australia but a species of *Palaemonetes* is recorded from there. Species are not known over most of Victoria, and on the east coast of Australia records are confined to Queensland. Intensive collecting around Sydney has failed to yield any freshwater species.

Family PALAEMONIDAE.

Caridea in which the first two pairs of legs are chelate, but dissimilar. The wrist of the second pair of legs is not divided and the rostrum is not hinged, but rigid.

Subfamily PALAEMONINAE.

A pleurobranch is present at the base of the third maxilliped; posterior margin of the telson with two pairs of spines and two or more plumose setae.

Only two genera of this subfamily are represented in the Australian freshwater fauna. The genus *Palaemonetes* is recorded with a single species from the south-west region of Western Australia. The genus *Macrobrachium* is widespread over the eastern half of the continent but is unknown in the coastal zone south from the Queensland border and over most of Victoria.

Genus *Macrobrachium* Bate, 1868.

Genotype, *Macrobrachium americanum* Bate, 1868.

Antennal and hepatic spines present; supraorbital and branchiostegal spines absent; mandible distinctly cleft, normally with a large three-segmented palp; dactylus of last three pairs of legs simple.

The species normally occur in freshwater but some may also be found in brackish and even salt water. Some Australian species seem to be entirely marine or really estuarine, for example, *novae-hollandiae* and *danae*, as an extensive search has failed to disclose any specimens in fresh water.

This genus has generally been considered as *Palaemon* while most species of *Leander* are now placed in *Palaemon*. *Leander* and *Palaemon* are typically marine though some species of *Palaemon* do occur in fresh water.

Macrobrachium novae-hollandiae (de Man), 1908.

Palaemon (*Eupalaemon*) *novae-hollandiae* de Man, 1908, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., (8), 1, 370.

Palaemon ornatus Haswell, 1882, Catalogue Austr. Crustacea, 196.

Macrobrachium novae-hollandiae Holthuis, 1950, Siboga Exped. 39, Decapoda 10, 155.