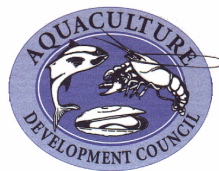


International Association of Astacology symposium and workshop

Dr Glen Whisson



Project No. 2000/265

International Association of Astacology symposium and workshop

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

2000/265**International Association of Astacology
symposium and workshop**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Glen Whisson
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OBJECTIVES:

- 1 To conduct the thirteenth biennial symposium of the International Association of Astacology in Fremantle, in August 2000.
- 2 To capitalise on the expertise gathered for IAA 13 by staging a one day workshop focussing on the aquaculture of Australian crayfish species, on the day prior to the beginning of the symposium.
- 3 To identify and initiate collaborative research programmes between local researchers and astacologists from interstate and overseas.
- 4 To gain maximum exposure for the Australian freshwater crayfish industry within the international aquaculture arena.
- 5 To provide a forum for an international gathering of crayfish scientists to consider environmental, technical and regulatory issues important to international communities at the outset of a new century.

SUMMARY:**International Association of Astacology conference
6-12 August 2000**

The thirteenth biennial symposium of the International Association of Astacology held at The Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle from 6 to 12 August 2000 was by all accounts an outstanding success. IAA 13 was opened by the Hon. Hendy Cowan, Deputy Premier of Western Australia. One hundred and twelve people participated in the event (73 standard registrations; 18 student registrations; 4 technical staff; 2 attending sponsors; 15 accompanying persons). Sixty nine oral presentations were delivered in eighteen separate sessions over 5 days. In addition, 30 posters were presented during two poster sessions. The Abstract Proceedings were distributed to delegates upon arrival, along with a conference poster and conference coffee mug. On August 9 delegates took a river cruise up the Swan River to the Mulberry Farm Convention Centre, where they participated in a Future Directions Forum that focussed on issues facing astacology in the new millennium.

On Saturday August 12, following the symposium, thirty delegates were taken on a field tour to tourist attractions and crayfish sites near Perth. Unfortunately the coach suffered a punctured tyre and one planned site visit was cancelled - delegates enjoyed an hour on the side of the road east of Perth, where they ate a packed lunch and photographed wild flowers. In the months following the symposium, this unplanned look at the Australian bush was one of the most talked about events.

Beginning Sunday 13 August, delegates embarked on three post-conference tours (South-West WA, Tasmania and North Queensland). All tours were a resounding success with four tour guides taking delegates to different States: Dr Brenton Knott and Dr Ravi Fotedar (South-West WA); Dr Alastair Richardson (Tasmania); and Mr Max Wingfield and Dr Clive Jones (North Queensland).

Freshwater Crayfish 13, the proceedings of the IAA 13 conference, was printed in July 2002, with the official launch taking place in Queretaro, Mexico, on 5 August 2002. The publication is a 627 page, hard cover book, that includes 56 peer-reviewed articles and 44 short communications from 180 contributing authors. For the first time in the 30 year history of the IAA, the proceedings were also produced in electronic format, with all delegates receiving a CD-ROM version, in addition to the hard copy. Feedback about the publication has been overwhelming with many IAA members claiming it is the most professional volume of *Freshwater Crayfish* ever produced.

Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop and Trade Display August 2000

The Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop and Trade Display was held on Saturday, 5 August 2000 at The Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle. Ninety two people took part in this successful event which comprised international and national overviews; industry presentations; research presentations and a facilitated workshop. Workshop Proceedings were compiled by Craig Lawrence (Fisheries Western Australia) and Glen Whisson (Curtin University) and distributed at the event.

A Trade Display was staged concurrently with the Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop on 5 August 2000. Seven industry sponsors constructed displays with one sponsor donating product to help offset food costs on the day.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED:

The IAA 13 symposium attracted over 100 delegates to Western Australia, facilitating information exchange among local experts and astacologists from 23 countries. The Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop and Trade Display was held immediately prior to IAA 13 in an effort to bring together Australian and overseas academics and aquaculturists with the view to forming beneficial links. Delegate feedback and Workshop registrations indicated that many international participants arrived one day early to attend the Workshop. Similarly, a number of Workshop participants identified value in remaining in Fremantle for the conference proper, providing them with the opportunity to hear the latest research results in the world of freshwater crayfish. Reports from Australian businesses represented at the Trade Display indicated that several commercial links and prospects were developed.

As part of IAA 13 delegates participated in a Future Directions Forum that focussed on issues facing astacology in the new millennium. Four key areas of astacology (conservation, burrowing biology, aquaculture and biodiversity) were debated.

The publication of the conference proceedings, *Freshwater Crayfish 13*, provided Australian researchers with an opportunity to publish in an international, peer-reviewed journal. Nearly one quarter of the 180 contributing authors were from Australia, including 23 full papers out of the 55 published, illustrating the significance of the publication to Australian research.

Post-conference media exposure of the event was significant with articles published local and international newsletters and magazines.

KEYWORDS: Freshwater crayfish, astacology, aquaculture, IAA 13 symposium

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1.0 BACKGROUND

The International Association of Astacology (IAA) was founded in Austria in 1972, and is dedicated to the study, conservation, and wise utilization of freshwater crayfish. The IAA is the pre-eminent crayfish organisation in the world, having a membership of over 350 astacologists from more than 40 countries, with strong representation from Australia. Australia has been represented on the IAA Executive since 1996, with IAA 13 convener, Dr Glen Whisson, holding positions of Secretary, President-elect and Past President of the organisation. The aims of IAA are to encourage the scientific study of crayfish for the benefit of mankind; to provide for dissemination of research findings relating to crayfish; and to develop an international forum for the free discussion of problems relevant to crayfish.

Freshwater crayfish are ideal organisms for research and teaching. Among the world's largest freshwater macroinvertebrates, the crayfish exhibits a number of classical features and is a very convenient animal for study. New species are still being identified whilst investigations are being conducted into many areas including prehistoric species, disease, conservation, population dynamics, life history, culture, habitat, toxicity tolerance, physiology and ecology. Farmed and wild caught crayfish are a significant commercial crop in many parts of the world with an aggregate value in excess of US\$100 million. Australia has a number of important freshwater crayfish species. This has resulted in significant representation on IAA committees by Australian astacologists, leading to the formation of an Australian chapter of the IAA.

The IAA stages international symposia that typically move between northern and southern continents every two years. Previous IAA symposia have been held in the following countries:

1972 Hinterthal, Austria
1974 Baton Rouge, USA
1976 Kuopio, Finland
1978 Thonon, France
1981 Davis, USA
1984 Lund, Sweden
1987 Lausanne, Switzerland
1990 Baton Rouge, USA
1992 Reading, England
1994 Adelaide, Australia
1996 Thunder Bay, Canada
1998 Augsburg, Germany

Freshwater crayfish accounted for 99.8% of the value of freshwater aquaculture production in Australia in 1997/98, and represented over 1.7% of total aquaculture value, not including pearls¹. Clearly, this is an important sector within the industry. Research into freshwater crayfish is well advanced in other parts of the world where large industries have developed around what is generally considered a highly marketable product. Having access to these advancements will help propel the development of freshwater crayfish aquaculture in Australia.

2.0 NEED

Research into freshwater crayfish has resulted in steady production increases in Australia over the last two decades. In an effort to take production and profitability to the next level, scientists in Australia took the opportunity to host IAA 13. Furthermore, the strategy of

¹ O'Sullivan, D. and Roberts, N. 1999. Status of Australian Aquaculture in 1997/98. Austasia Trade Directory 1999, Turtle Press, Hobart, Tasmania, pp 14-28.

organisers was to couple the event with a one-day workshop/seminar focussing on Australian crayfish aquaculture. The timing of the workshop/seminar (the day before the conference began) was set to attract participation from international astacologists, already in Fremantle for IAA 13. This promoted technology transfer into Australia.

Following on from the one day aquaculture workshop, the IAA 13 symposium provided a mechanism for the direct transferal and dissemination of cutting-edge research within Australia, and provided an international platform for local crayfish scientists to present their research to world-renowned astacologists, and pursue collaborative links for future research. Fisheries WA delivered six papers at the conference, including recent research into yabby and marron aquaculture.

The fragility of crayfish aquaculture was highlighted in the 1980s when the crayfish plague, *Aphanomyces astaci*, obliterated stocks throughout Europe. Research has subsequently identified Australian crayfish as being extremely vulnerable to this infection, reminding Australia of the importance of comprehensive translocation policies. This has been further highlighted by disease concerns within the yabby industry. A forum for discussing these issues, and hearing from scientists representing afflicted countries, will augur well for the continuation of sound policy to protect Australia's prime market niche.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To conduct the thirteenth biennial symposium of the International Association of Astacology in Fremantle, in August 2000.
- 3.2 To capitalise on the expertise gathered for IAA 13 by staging a one day workshop focussing on the aquaculture of Australian crayfish species, on the day prior to the beginning of the symposium.
- 3.3 To identify and initiate collaborative research programmes between local researchers and astacologists from interstate and overseas.
- 3.4 To gain maximum exposure for the Australian freshwater crayfish industry within the international aquaculture arena.
- 3.5 To provide a forum for an international gathering of crayfish scientists to consider environmental, technical and regulatory issues important to international communities at the outset of a new century.

4.0 METHODS

4.1 IAA 13 proposal

At the IAA 11 conference in Canada in 1996, a delegation of Australian members, headed by Glen Whisson and Louis Evans from Curtin University, put forward a proposal for IAA 13 to be held in Perth in 2000. The poster and oral presentations were very well received and there was overwhelming endorsement of the proposal. Two years later, in Augsburg, Germany, Glen Whisson also received enthusiastic support for the preliminary programme, presented to delegates. At that meeting IAA members were presented with a questionnaire to assist with the organisation of IAA 13 (Appendix 2.1).

4.2 Organising Committee

The IAA 13 Organising Committee was established in 1998 and comprised:

Glen Whisson	Chair, Curtin University of Technology
Louis Evans	Curtin University of Technology
Simon Bennison	Aquaculture Council of WA
Brenton Knott	University of WA
Alastair Richardson	University of Tasmania

Craig Lawrence	Fisheries WA
Clive Jones	Queensland Department of Primary Industries
Ravi Fotedar	Curtin University of Technology

The Organising Committee produced registration documentation which was sent in hard copy to all IAA members, emailed to many crustacean organisations, and posted on the IAA website (Appendix 2.2).

4.3 Sponsorship

The Organising Committee held regular meetings at Curtin University, with preliminary budgets indicating that the conference would cost in the region of \$270,000 to stage. Sponsorship was offered at three levels:

4.3.1 Major Sponsor

Contribution:	\$15,000 cash
Benefit:	4 tickets to Aquaculture Workshop (value \$160); Trade display at Aquaculture Workshop (value \$250); 2 conference registrations (value \$1100); Acknowledgement in Abstract Booklet, Workshop Proceedings, Conference Proceedings and formal events; Inserts into conference satchel; Badging on all conference literature; other benefits to be negotiated.

4.3.2 Industry Sponsor

Contribution:	\$1000 cash or \$1500 product
Benefit:	2 tickets to Aquaculture Workshop (value \$160); Trade display at Aquaculture Workshop (value \$250); 2 tickets to Welcome supper/ drinks (value \$80); 2 tickets to Monday function (value \$100); Acknowledgement in Abstract Booklet, Workshop Proceedings, Conference Proceedings and formal events; 2 x 1 page inserts into conference satchel.

4.3.3 Industry Supporter

Contribution:	\$500 cash or \$750 product (or combination)
Benefit:	2 tickets to Aquaculture Workshop (value \$160); Trade display at Aquaculture Workshop (value \$250); 2 tickets to Welcome supper/ drinks (value \$80); Acknowledgement in Abstract Booklet, Workshop Proceedings, Conference Proceedings.

The Organising Committee secured the following cash sponsors during 1999 and 2000:

Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	\$15,000
Aquaculture Development Council	\$15,250
Fisheries Western Australia	\$ 5,000
Queensland Department of Primary Industries	\$ 5,000
RMax	\$ 1,000
Marron Growers Association of Western Australia	\$ 500
Yabby Producers Association of Western Australia	\$ 500
Diamond Networks	\$ 500
Perth Scientific Equipment	\$ 500

Cambinata Yabbies \$ 250

Many other organisations gave in-kind contributions to the event, including Pemberton Aquaculture Producers who donated all marron for the Aussie BBQ on the Monday night.

4.4 Conference proceedings

World renowned artist Robert Juniper was commissioned to produce the conference collage, entitled: "Cherax". This collage was auctioned at the Symposium Banquet on 10 August 2000, with the highest bidder being local marron identity Dr Noel Morrissy. In addition, Robert Juniper produce 50 limited edition silk screen prints of the conference painting for sale to conference delegates. The collage was also placed on the conference calendar (Appendix 2.3), which was distributed to delegates with the IAA 13 mug (Appendix 2.4) as a conference gift.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Staging the event

IAA 13 commenced on 6 August 2000, the day following the successful Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop. The venue was The Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle. Delegates were welcomed at an informal "Drinks" event on the Sunday night at 7pm by Professor Murray McGregor, Director of the Muresk Institute of Agriculture at Curtin University. The following day registrations continued and the conference proper began with a welcome from Glen Whisson (Chair, Organising Committee) and David Rogers (IAA President). The Deputy Premier of Western Australia, the Hon. Hendy Cowan then delivered the opening address, followed by the inaugural Host Country Lecture delivered by marron industry guru Dr Noel Morrissy. Following these introductory addresses, oral presentations began, having being organised into sessions according to topic: Aquaculture; ecotoxicology and diseases; physiology and biochemistry; ecology; biogeography conservation and management; crayfish burrows; systematics, genetics and evolution; fisheries; life history and behaviour. A renowned astacological expert was invited to chair each of these sessions.

5.2 Attendance

112 people participated in the event, comprising:

- 73 standard registrations
- 18 student registrations
- 4 technical staff
- 2 attending sponsors
- 15 accompanying persons

Sixty nine oral presentations were delivered in eighteen separate sessions over 5 days. In addition, 30 posters were presented during two poster sessions.

5.3 Abstract Proceedings

The Abstract Proceedings (Appendix 2.5) were distributed to delegates upon arrival, along with the conference poster and conference coffee mug. Items were placed into a specially produced satchel bearing sponsors' logos (Appendix 2.6)

5.4 Future Directions Forum

A highlight of the conference was the river cruise up the Swan River to the Mulberry Farm Convention Centre, where a Future Directions open forum was held. This forum was proposed by Glen Whisson and Brenton Knott to acknowledge the end of the second millennium. Four leading astacologists were asked to deliver a summary address on the current status facing key areas of crayfish science: Conservation (Keith Crandall); Biodiversity (David Rogers); Aquaculture (Hans Ackefors); Burrowing biology (Alastair Richardson). The session was chaired by Brenton Knott who, following each address, encouraged the audience to participate in debate on the priority issues in the respective areas, as we entered a new millennium.

5.5 Highlights

Other highlights of the conference included: the 'Aussie BBQ' which included a large quantity of delicious marron; the symposium banquet featuring an auction of the Crayfish Painting; the poster sessions giving younger delegates an opportunity to mix with experienced scientists; and the Sture Abrahamsson Memorial Lecture delivered by Keith Crandall (Appendix 2.7).

5.6 Field trip

On Saturday August 12, following the symposium, thirty delegates were taken on a field tour to tourist attractions and crayfish sites near Perth. Unfortunately the coach suffered a punctured tyre and one planned site visit was cancelled - delegates enjoyed an hour on the side of the road east of Perth, where they ate a packed lunch and photographed wild flowers. In the months following the symposium, this unplanned look at the Australian bush was one of the most talked about events.

5.7 Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop and Trade Display

The Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop and Trade Display was held on Saturday, 5 August 2000 at The Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle. Ninety two people took part in this successful event which comprised international and national overviews; industry presentations; research presentations and a facilitated workshop. Workshop Proceedings were distributed at the event (Appendix 2.8).

The Trade Display was staged concurrently with the Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop on 5 August 2000. Seven industry sponsors constructed displays with one sponsor donating product to help offset food costs on the day. The Workshop was advertised locally in ACWA News and the Marron Growers Bulletin (Appendix 2.9), and internationally in Crayfish News.

5.8 Post conference tours

Beginning on Sunday 13 August, delegates embarked on three post-conference tours (South-West WA, Tasmania and North Queensland). All tours were a resounding success with four tour guides taking delegates to different States: Dr Brenton Knott and Dr Ravi Fotedar (South-West WA); Dr Alastair Richardson (Tasmania); and Mr Max Wingfield and Dr Clive Jones (North Queensland).

5.9 Publicity

IAA 13 was announced through many media including: ACWA News, the Marron Growers Bulletin, Crayfish News, radio interviews (e.g. radio interview on 3 August 2000 between

Glen Whisson and Grant Woodams on Radio National publicising both the IAA 13 symposium and the Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop), other conferences, IAA website, international magazines and calendars, brochures and pamphlets.

Post-conference media exposure was significant. Articles were published in: ACWA News, the Marron Growers Bulletin, Crayfish News, Fish Farming International, IAA website (Appendix 2.10).

5.10 Discussion

Feedback in the two years following IAA 13 and special mention by the incoming IAA President at IAA 14 in Mexico, August 2002, indicate that the conference programme and particularly the publication of proceedings were considered to be world class. The combination of a national workshop and an international conference allowed delegates to attend both events, assisting in the integration and extension of knowledge between academics and industry.

The Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop and trade display, the IAA 13 symposium and associated programme, and the resulting publications will assist future organising committees confronted with the development of similar events.

6.0 BENEFITS

6.1 Relevance to Australian crayfish aquaculture

The latest information on crayfish aquaculture research was exchanged through three oral sessions specifically on crayfish aquaculture, and an additional 9 posters.

Many presentations were relevant to freshwater crayfish aquaculture in Australia, including results of studies on:

- ⇒ growth-density effects;
- ⇒ impact of shelter on growth and survival;
- ⇒ intensive crayfish polyculture systems;
- ⇒ dietary requirements of crayfish;
- ⇒ pond draining strategies to enhance harvestable yields;
- ⇒ moist versus dry diets;
- ⇒ freshwater crayfish diseases and treatments;
- ⇒ birds and fish transmitting crayfish diseases;
- ⇒ anaesthetising crayfish with electric currents;
- ⇒ causes and consequences of stunted crayfish populations;
- ⇒ the nutritional contribution of exuvia in marron diets;
- ⇒ pond design (spiral shaped ponds);
- ⇒ intensive indoor crayfish culture using heated water from power plants;
- ⇒ genetic differences between crayfish strains and the implications for aquaculture;
- ⇒ factors that affect crayfish mortality during purging;
- ⇒ impact of feed quality on growth rate and size variation in marron ponds;
- ⇒ impact of deregulation on the WA marron aquaculture industry;
- ⇒ impact of temperature on crayfish growth;
- ⇒ catch efficiency of crayfish traps;
- ⇒ survey of commercial marron farming in Western Australia;
- ⇒ marron as a candidate species for mine void aquaculture.

6.2 Proceedings

Freshwater Crayfish 13, the proceedings of the IAA 13 conference (Appendix 2.11), was edited by Glen Whisson and Brenton Knott and printed in July 2002, with the official launch taking place in Queretaro, Mexico, on 5 August 2002 (Appendix 2.12). The publication is a 627 page, hard cover book, that includes 56 peer-reviewed articles and 44 short communications from 180 contributing authors. For the first time in the 30 year history of the IAA, the proceedings were also produced in electronic format, with all delegates receiving a CD-ROM version (Appendix 2.13), in addition to the hard copy. The review process was managed by Dr Brenton Knott and involved 18 international and 16 Australian crayfish experts. Electronic submission was encouraged with all authors being sent PDF proofs of their camera-ready articles prior to final printing. This was the first time such a proofing process has been completed for the *Freshwater Crayfish* journal, and contributors agreed that it significantly improved the final quality of the document. Feedback about the publication has been overwhelming with many IAA members claiming it is the most professional volume of *Freshwater Crayfish* ever produced.

7.0 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

It is usual for IAA symposia to be held on opposite side of the globe every two years. For example, the IAA 14 meeting was held in Mexico following IAA 13 (Western Australia). IAA 15 is set down for London in 2004, where a decision will be made on the venue for the subsequent meeting, IAA 16 in 2006. The IAA executive will favour a meeting in Australasia and some Australian IAA members have considered the Gold Coast or Cairns to be possible venues. If either of these locations were chosen it would be prudent to hold another "Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop" in conjunction with the event, following feedback from IAA 13. Similarly, publication of proceedings in CD-ROM format would be encouraged.

IAA support within Australia has strengthened in line with the two international meetings that have been staged here (1994 and 2000), resulting in the establishment of an IAA Australia branch. This development is certainly of benefit to local crayfish-related industries as assists with the alignment of industry, government and scientists. It is recommended that this relationship be fostered through support of future meetings on a national and international scale.

8.0 PLANNED OUTCOMES

The outputs of this project include:

- a successful aquaculture workshop with international guest speakers
- workshop proceedings distributed at the event
- a trade display
- a successful international symposium
- an open forum debating relevant issues
- a hard cover book of proceedings
- a CD-ROM version of proceedings

These outputs have contributed to the planned outcomes as described in Section 3.0.

9.0 CONCLUSION

By all accounts, IAA 13 was an outstanding success. In conjunction with the Australian Crayfish Aquaculture Workshop, it brought a concentration of the world's elite crayfish

scientists to Perth that has never been seen before. The publication of the conference proceedings, *Freshwater Crayfish 13*, in July 2002, has resulted in the dissemination of astacological advances worldwide, as well as providing a platform for the extension of 23 research publications by Australian researchers. The production of *Freshwater Crayfish 13* in CD ROM format displayed an innovation incorporated for the first time in the 30 year history of the IAA.

10.0 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The International Association of Astacology holds an inventory of *Freshwater Crayfish 13* books. Future sales of these books will assist with the development of IAA Australia and the planning and staging of future IAA conferences in Australia.

The author has discussed potential project income issues with FRDC and it is agreed that not issues of intellectual property rights or future project income exist.

11.0 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

While registrations for IAA 13 were lower than expected, cuts to expenditure kept a balanced budget while maintaining quality in all areas of the conference. This was achieved by increasing in kind contributions by participating organisations, an agreed product “buyback” by IAA, and a lower than expected publication cost of *Freshwater Crayfish 13*, the conference proceedings.

	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
INCOME:	142500	98035
EXPENDITURE:	142500	98555
DEFICIT:		520

A Budget Reconciliation is presented in Appendix 2.14.

APPENDIX ONE:**IAA 13 contributing personnel:****Organising Committee:**

Glen Whisson	Chair, Curtin University of Technology
Louis Evans	Curtin University of Technology
Simon Bennison	Aquaculture Council of WA
Brenton Knott	University of WA
Alastair Richardson	University of Tasmania
Craig Lawrence	Fisheries WA
Clive Jones	Queensland Department of Primary Industries
Ravi Fotedar	Curtin University of Technology

Administrative Support:

Melissa Rinaldi
Michael Burgess
Sarah Anderson
Tania Whisson

Conference field trips, tours and functions:

Brenton Knott
Alastair Richardson
Craig Lawrence
Clive Jones
Ravi Fotedar
Max Wingfield
Carey Nagle
Nathan Ellard
Frank Mauger
Dan Sampey
Tom Swannell
Justin Bellanger

Workshop and workshop proceedings:

Craig Lawrence
Glen Whisson
Anna Muir
Justin Bellanger

Proceedings:

Glen Whisson
Brenton Knott
Tania Whisson