

THE AUSTRALIAN FRESHWATER PRAWNS OF THE FAMILY ATYIDAE

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(Figures 1-11.)

Very little is known of the Australian freshwater Atyidae. These small prawns are widespread in all the permanent waters, occurring in small waterholes as well as in larger lakes and streams. They generally prefer areas where there is an abundant growth of aquatic plants but are also found in quite open water. Some of the species are found only just above the tidal zone and others where the water is slightly brackish. There are only two major papers on the Australian representatives of this group and these were both published in 1926. Most surprisingly the close appearance of the two has not resulted in any synonymy. Calman (1926) erected a new genus *Caridinides* for a north Queensland species and representatives of three well known genera *Atya*, *Paratya* and *Caridina* also occur.

The single species of *Atya*, though widespread, is not at all common. These prawns are the largest of the group with a length up to about 55 mm. *Caridana* and the related *Caridinides* are widespread, more in the north, particularly Queensland, where there are six species of *Caridina* in addition to the one species of *Caridinides*. The only species of *Caridina* recorded outside Queensland is *mccullochi* Roux from Pallal, Horton River, New South Wales. *Paratya* is widespread throughout southern Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. In Queensland specimens of this genus have not been collected further north than the Burnett River.

Variation is common in most species of this family so that it is often difficult to identify single specimens, particularly if they are juvenile. Oviparous females are much more readily identified for egg-size is rather constant for a given species, if one bears in mind possible variation due to embryonic development and also to the manner of preservation.

Family ATYIDAE.

Caridea in which the first two pairs of legs are chelate and similar and only of moderate size. The fingers of the chelae are spooned and tipped with tufts of long hairs.

Genus *Atya* Leach, 1816.

No exopodites on any of the pereopods. Second pereopods similar to first, with carpus excavated and the palmar portion of the chelae obsolete.

Atya striolata McCulloch & McNeill, 1923.

Atya striolata McCulloch & McNeill, 1923, Rec. Austr. Mus., 14: 55; Roux, 1926, Rec. Austr. Mus., 15: 253.

The series of specimens from Cave Creek, Upper Nerang River, Queensland is described to facilitate comparison with the New South Wales form as described by McCulloch & McNeill.

Size.—43-55 mm. Smallest specimen male; all the remainder (6) females.