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Meet Strawberry Claws – a new species of hermit crab

Say hello to Strawberry Claws, a large new-to-science species of hermit crab recently described by Queensland Museum scientists.

With its distinctive crimson claws, it was only natural the crab was given the scientific name *Strigopagurus fragarchela*, which is derived from the Latin form 'strawberry' (Fragaria), combined with 'chela' to highlight the bright red colour of the claws and walking legs.

Scientifically described by Queensland Museum Honorary Peter Davie, and Queensland Museum Collection Manager Dr Marissa McNamara, the hermit crab can be found in relatively deep water (120-260 m) off south-eastern Queensland and has been given the common name 'Strawberry-clawed Hermit'.

Dr McNamara said the new species has several highly distinctive features. Most striking is its bright red claws, but it also has evolved its own unique method of producing underwater sound (stridulation), much like cicadas do in the air.

"We knew straight away this was a special hermit crab, and quickly gave it the nickname 'Strawberry Claws,'" Dr McNamara said.

"The identification of *Strigopagurus fragarchela* is an exciting addition to the genus, for which Australia appears to be the stronghold. We now have four endemic species, two of which are only found in Queensland."

The new hermit crab has only been collected by trawler catches, so little is yet known of its ecology, but they are without doubt important members of the rich biological communities of the continental shelf off southeastern Queensland.

Queensland Museum CEO Dr Jim Thompson commended the work of Peter Davie and Dr Marissa McNamara on this scientific paper.

"The work of the scientists and researchers at Queensland Museum helps in providing a record of our state's biodiversity for future generations," Dr Thompson said.

"Our natural history collections are more than just preserved specimens – they are vital tools for scientific discovery, conservation and public education."

The scientific paper was recently published in *Memoirs of Queensland Museum*.

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