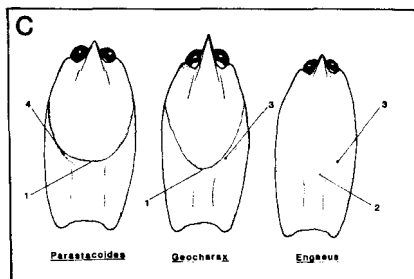


B—The abdomen and tail fan of *Astacopsis* and *Parastacoides*, showing the presence (1) or absence (2) of spines on the sides of the abdominal segments, and the terminal spines on elements of the tail fan in *Parastacoides*, where the outer ramus (4) may or may not exhibit a terminal spine, and the inner ramus with one or more spines, or none at all (5). The tail fan of *Astacopsis* never has terminal spines (3).



C—The carapace of three genera of crayfish, showing the deep U-shaped dorsal grooves of *Parastacoides* and *Geocharax* (1) and the shallow V-shaped grooves of *Engaeus* (2). Laterally the grooves may be fused or almost fused (4) or widely separate (3).

## PREDATION ON INTRODUCED ANIMALS BY THE TASMANIAN TIGER SNAKE

Simon Fearn

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At 11.30 am on the 10th of March, 1987 a large female Tiger Snake, *Notechis ater humphreysi*, 129cm long with a girth of 13cm was hand caught while basking outside its homesite under a wooden shed on the property of Dr Bob Brown in the Liffey Valley.

The shed is situated in an old paddock that has become partially overgrown with bracken ferns, blackberries and saplings of various trees and shrubs. This area borders forest at the foot of Dry's Bluff.

When captured a very large bulge was noticed in the posterior third of the snake. When placed in a freezer the snake regurgitated a rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

The head of the rabbit had been completely digested and the front legs almost so. The headless remains were whole and showed no external damage. Faeces in the lower alimentary canal contained hair and five rabbits teeth. A small portion of jaw bone with two teeth still in place was also present. Length of rabbit remains from neck to base of tail was 16cm, girth 13cm. With the head present this rabbit would have been at least 19cm long. The snake was in excellent condition internally and weighed (stomach empty) 850 grams. Rabbits are extremely common in the valley and may be a regular part of the diet of large specimens of *N.a. humphreysi*.

At 2.00 pm on the 3rd of December, 1985 an adult *N.a. humphreysi*, 107cm long, was observed feeding on two fledgling sparrow chicks, *Passer domesticus*. The snake was living in the sandstone ruins of a house in a paddock on the 'Mountainvale' property approximately 4.5 km from the Liffey Valley in northern Tasmania.

The sparrows nest was situated in a cavity in a weathered section of wall 150cm from the ground.

The snake was discovered foraging around the ruins and soon after it began to climb the wall by first utilising blackberries growing against the wall to a height of 60cm, and scaled the remaining 90cm by winding up depressions in the weathered and uneven surface of the wall. The entrance hole leading to the nest was some 6cm across and the snake crawled in to a depth of approximately 18cm.

As the snake entered the hole distressed chirping could be heard from within. After several minutes the snake retreated with a large sparrow chick, half swallowed head first. The snake then allowed itself to drop to the ground where it finished swallowing the chick. The snake then returned to the hole in the same manner and entered again. The snake remained with its head in the hole for five minutes. It then withdrew performing the post meal gaping of the mouth characteristic of this species after it feeds. A large bulge was travelling down the snake's body, indicating a second chick had been eaten. The sparrow chicks were well grown, with well developed feathers, and were nearly ready to leave the nest. The snake then returned to the ground and basked in a loose coil.

Many thanks to Dr Bob Brown for bringing the snake on his property to my attention.

## FUNNELWEBB'S FATAL FINAL FLING

*Elizabeth Turner*

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, GPO Box 1164M, Hobart, 7001

On the 3rd November, 1983, Mrs Richardson of Collinsvale donated a female Funnelweb spider (*Hadronyche venenata*) to the Tasmanian Museum. The spider was placed in a glass box with soil about 8 cm deep covering the bottom.

She quickly made a burrow and, except for rare glimpses of her at the entrance, I barely knew she was there for the next 3 years. Flies put into the case during the day were gone the next morning, and draglines of web around the case also showed that she was active at night. The entrance to the web was un-