



Scientific Name:

*Potamon fluviatile
lanfrancoi*

English:

Maltese
Freshwater Crab

Maltese:

*il-qabru;
il-granċ tal-ilma ħelu*

The Maltese Freshwater Crab lives in areas with a permanent source of freshwater. It is generally found near watercourses, where it excavates burrows in the sediment. Such burrows can, at times, exceed half a metre in length, and can have more than one opening. The latter feature would enable the crab to escape if threatened by a predator. The Freshwater Crab may also inhabit rubble walls close to a permanent source of flowing freshwater; and is able to sustain itself on: leaves, fruit, as well as animals, such as large insects and snails.

Noting that the crab requires a source of water all year round, its habitat distribution is rather restricted. Threats thus include water abstraction, loss of habitat and pollution of freshwater from agricultural pesticides; in addition to human persecution. All the above, in fact, have contributed to this species becoming very rare and endangered.

This species is protected by the Environment Protection Act; implying that, amongst others, it is illegal to deliberately disturb, capture or kill, attempt to kill, keep or transport any specimen of this species, without a prior official permit from the Environment and Resources Authority. The Maltese Freshwater Crab is only known from the Maltese Islands, and is therefore an animal endemic to Malta.