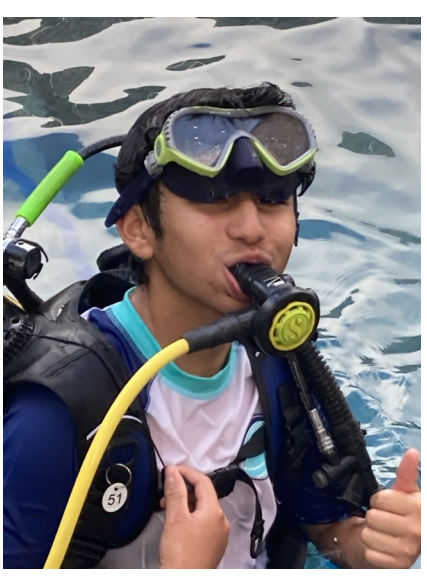
May 20, 2025

TEXAS STATE
EDWARDS AQUIFER
RESEARCH & DATA CENTER

In this newsletter:



Aquatic Science Adventure Camp Update

ASAC 2025 Open Sessions

Just a few open spots left! Make sure to register soon. There are waitlists for camps that are full. Go here to register: Aquatic Science Adventure Camps.

Overnight Expedition Camps: 2 (12-14), 5 & 6 (ages: 9 - 12)

Dive into an adventure like no other! Join us for experiences like river rafting, scuba diving, and wild cave exploration! Campers will also engage with our expert staff to delve into scientific investigations related to water. Set on the vibrant Texas State University campus and University Camp, our campers get to explore university spaces and beautiful San Marcos. Camps run from Sunday afternoon to Friday afternoon. Don't miss out on this epic adventure!
Total Cost: $1,099.

(Overnight Expedition Camps 1, 3, and 4 are full, but waitlists are available.)

Explorer Day Camp 1 (ages: 12 - 14)

This is a week of action-packed activities, running from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Campers will conquer the rapids during river rafting, uncover hidden secrets in caves, learn about life in the river, and so much more! Lunch is included every day. Total Cost: $500.

(Explorer Day Camp 2 (ages: 9-12) is full, but a waitlist is available.)

Do you love ASAC? If so, consider supporting us. Camp expenses continue to rise, so we have entered a new phase of fundraising with a long-term vision of establishing a permanent support fund to make ASAC affordable to everyone. Donate HERE and type or copy/paste **Aquatic Science Adventure Camp Support Fund** into the program search.

For questions, contact Kellie Donajkowski at EARDC_education@txstate.edu or 512-245-6176.

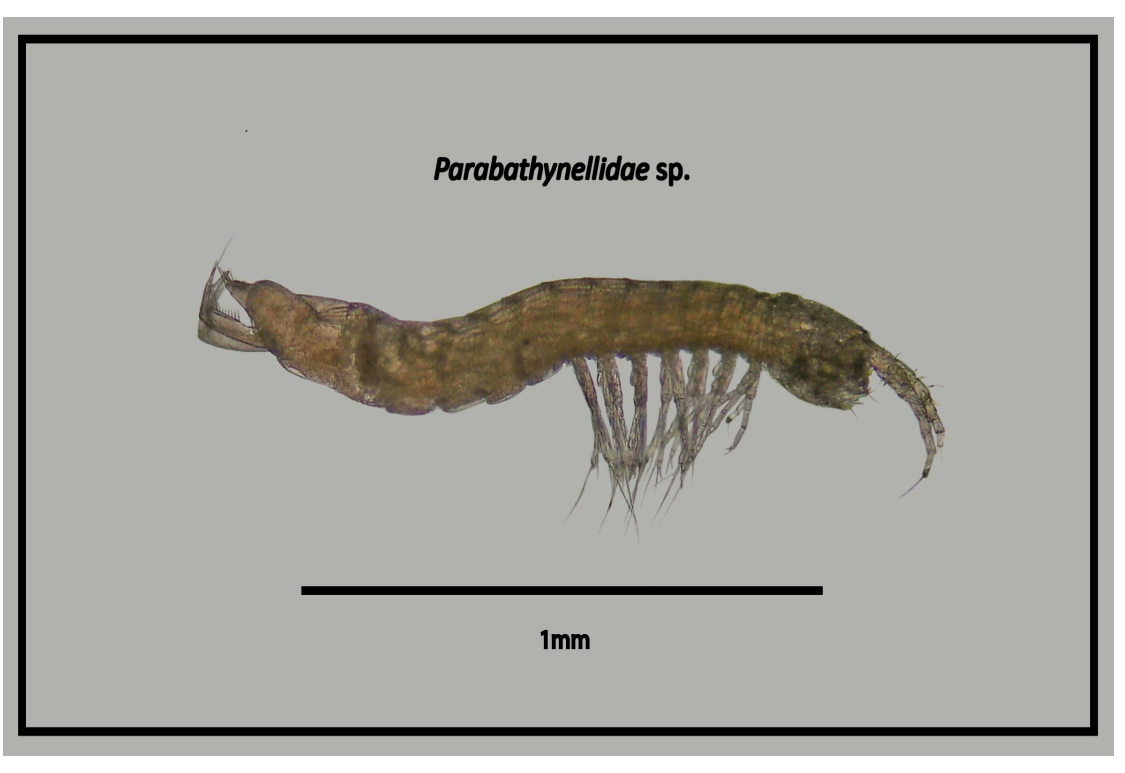


Photo: An example species of Bathynellacea.

Research Spotlight –

International collaborations and Bathynellacea

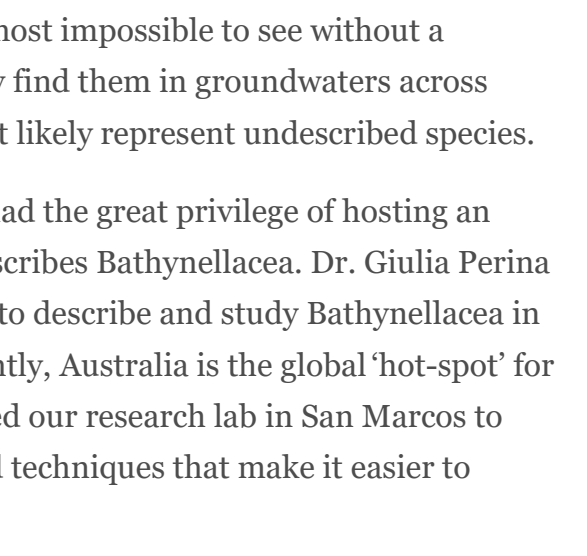
The work of describing new groundwater crustaceans

You are probably wondering 'What are Bathynellacea?'. If so, you are not alone! Bathynellacea is an order of tiny crustaceans (other crustaceans include crayfish, shrimp, crabs, and lobsters) and they are so poorly known that they don't even have a common name! These creatures are found around the globe, exclusively in groundwater habitats, and most commonly occur in interstitial spaces. Like most creatures adapted for life in total darkness, they lack eyes and pigment and are long and slender, which allows them to easily move through tiny spaces in aquifers. Although Bathynellacea are almost impossible to see without a microscope, we at the EARDC frequently find them in groundwaters across Texas, and we have many specimens that likely represent undescribed species.

For more than a week in early May, we had the great privilege of hosting an international expert who studies and describes Bathynellacea. Dr. Giulia Perina is an Italian researcher who has worked to describe and study Bathynellacea in Australia for more than a decade. Currently, Australia is the global 'hot-spot' for Bathynellacea diversity. Dr. Perina visited our research lab in San Marcos to teach us how to use specialized tools and techniques that make it easier to dissect and draw new species.

During Dr. Perina's visit, we started describing two new species: one from the Trans-Pecos region in far west Texas and a second from a sandy creek in the far northern Panhandle region. We also spent a day at Colorado Bend State Park, hoping to rediscover the first Bathynellacea described in all of North America (in 1975): *Texanobathynella bowmani*. As far as we know, it has not been seen at the type locality in the Park since it was discovered. With a research permit, we collected samples that we will sort in the lab. If we find them, we can compare the DNA of this species with DNA from others around Texas, in the hopes of learning more about their distribution and ranges.

Building collaborations like this is critical for learning more about the amazing creatures that live beneath our feet. The long and sometimes tedious process of classifying and describing new species is called taxonomy, and is something that very few people are skilled in. Dr. Perina is one of only a few who describe Bathynellacea, and we are grateful to have had this opportunity to learn from her and collaborate with her.



Left photo: Dr. Benjamin Schwartz and Dr. Giulia Perina sorting subterranean samples. Right photo: Dr. Giulia Perina in the field, collecting hyporheic samples.

Analytical Lab Hours

Regular Hours:

Monday – Friday, 8am – 5 pm, closed for lunch 12-1:15pm, bacteriological samples are not accepted on Fridays, only by special request.

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