SPECIES AT A GLANCE Crayfish



Crayfish are small, freshwater crustaceans that can be found in many parts of the world, including North and South America, Australia, and Europe. These distinctive invertebrates typically have two pincers (chelae) and a flat, fan-shaped tail used for swimming at the bottoms of lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. Among the approximately 500 different species of crayfish in the world, a handful of them have been introduced to the west coast.

Left: Red swamp crayfish.

REPORT THIS SPECIES! In **California:** Call 1-916-651-8797, or e-mail invasives@dfg.ca.gov; in **Oregon:** call 1-866-INVADER, or Oregon InvasivesHotline.org; in **Washington:** call 1-877-9-INFEST, or visit www. invasivespecies.wa.gov/; in other states: call 1-877-STOP-ANS.

Species in the news

leff Adams

Invasive Crayfish May Be Class Pets First Crayfish Invasion, an Oregon Public Broadcasting video (www.opb.org/ programs/ofg/segments/view/1777)*

Learning extension

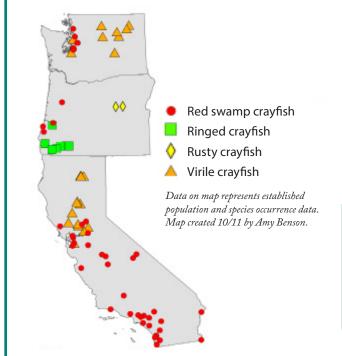
Clawing through the food web.

Resources

Red swamp, ringed, rusty, and native crayfish identification: http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/breakingwaves/2011/10/24/crayfish-native-or-invaders/*

Why you should care

On the west coast, invasive crayfish threaten native fish, amphibians, crayfish, and plants by eating them directly or by competing for food and shelter. Once invasive crayfish are established, they are extremely difficult and costly to eliminate. Removing rusty crayfish from five small bodies of water in Wyoming cost over \$34,000 (WGFD 2008).



How they got here and spread

Crayfish have been commonly used in very different settings—from pets to live bait, from restaurants to classrooms, and from research labs to crawfish boils. Sometimes, well-intentioned people will even find live crayfish in a store and release them, and agencies have stocked them for harvest. Each of these uses could introduce or spread crayfish to new habitats. Because female crayfish can store sperm for a long time, just one misplaced crayfish has the potential to establish a population.

What you can do

Never move live crayfish of any kind from one water body to another. Even the native "signal crayfish" can cause harm in water bodies where it did not previously live. Also learn how to identify the native signal crayfish and the species of invasive crayfish.

COOL FACTS

Certain species of crayfish can live for 20 years, and the largest crayfish can weigh 11 pounds.

In 2010, Louisiana produced 110 million pounds of crayfish (nearly all red swamp crayfish), worth \$168.5 million.

^{*}Last accessed 10/11