

RUSTY CRAYFISH

Faxonius rusticus, *Orconectes rusticus*
Cambaridae, the freshwater crayfish family

FACTSHEET INFORMATION

Summary of Invasiveness

- Considered one of the most invasive introduced crayfish.
- Competes with and displaces native crayfish.
- Can thrive in very high densities.
- Very aggressive and voracious; feeds on macrophytes, fish eggs, and invertebrates which decreases biodiversity.
- Introduction leads to declines in aquatic vegetation and sport fish abundance.
- Requires more food compared to similar species due to its high metabolism.

Diagnostic Characteristics

- Dark brown body with rusty spots on both sides of carapace.
- Claws are grayish-green to reddish-brown with black bands on tips.
- When claws are closed there is an oval gap in the middle.
- Claws are smooth.

Introduction and Movement

- Native to rivers and lakes in the Ohio river basin in the USA.
- Can spread both unaided and facilitated by humans.
- Human caused introduction into new areas via discharged live bait.
- The rusty crayfish is the most widespread alien crayfish in the Great Lakes, occurring in all five of them.
- Present in the aquarium trade.

Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, ensure that all watercraft, wading gear, and other water related equipment are clean, drained, and dry between use in each waterbody.
- Use of live bait is prohibited in Idaho.
- Never release any animal or plant into the wild.
- Be aware that most species of crayfish will travel over land and may easily escape ponds and water gardens.
- Always Remember: **DON'T LET IT LOOSE**

CLEAN & DRAIN & DRY

Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/72037>.



USGS, US Geological Survey, Bugwood.org



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