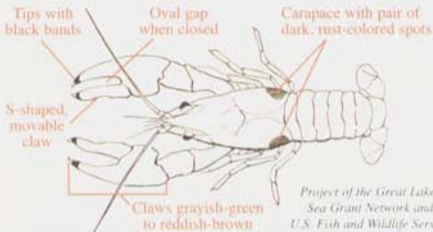


# *Rusty Crayfish WATCH*



# How to Identify Rusty Crayfish

*(Use the following illustration as a guide; some characteristics may be absent.)*



*Project of the Great Lakes  
Sea Grant Network and  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*



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Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
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## General Characteristics

- Adults generally 3-5 inches (7.5-13 cm) long (nose to tail)
- Claws larger and smoother than many other crayfish; usually without wart-like white bumps
- Claws with oval gap when closed; no distinct thin slit or notch present

## *Rusty Crayfish*

Rusty crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*) are invasive crustaceans spreading to lakes, rivers, and streams in several areas of North America. They are more aggressive than other native crayfish, better able to avoid fish predation, and can harm native fish populations by eating their eggs and young. They can displace native crayfish, hybridize with them, and graze on and eliminate aquatic plants.

Native to the Ohio River drainage, rusty crayfish have spread to several U.S. states and Ontario. They have likely spread through bait bucket release by anglers, aquarium release by hobbyists, activities of commercial harvesters, and live study specimen release by teachers and students who buy them from biological supply houses. Females can carry fertilized eggs or a male's sperm so even the release of a single female could establish a new population. Eradicating established infestations is impossible. Your help detecting and reporting new infestations is vital for preventing their spread.

### *What you can do*

- **Learn** to identify rusty crayfish (see back cover).
- **Inspect** and remove aquatic plants and animals from boat, motor, and trailer.
- **Drain** lake or river water from livewell and bilge before leaving access.
- **Dispose** of unwanted live bait and study specimens in the trash.
- **Never** dump live fish or crayfish from one body of water into another.
- **Report** new sightings – note exact location; freeze specimen in a sealed plastic bag; and call the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Program in Zion, IL, (847) 872-8677; the Illinois DNR in Topeka, IL, (309) 968-7531; or the Indiana DNR, Div. of Fish & Wildlife in Indianapolis, IN, (317) 232-4093.

### *REMINDER: Know the rules!*

Specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but some jurisdictions prohibit possession of rusty crayfish and other invasive aquatic animals and plants. Others may restrict possession for specific uses only. Contact your local natural resource management agency for instructions. Unauthorized introduction of crayfish, fish, or plants into the wild is illegal. Protect your property and our waters.