



## Crayfish

The crayfish scenario is a complex one, we have one native species; the White Clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, a number of introduced non-native species and the constant threat of more to come from abroad imported by the aquatic pet trade. Of those non-native presently loose in our waters the one most known to anglers is the American Signal Crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus* but there are others present in less numbers; the Spiny Cheeked Crayfish *Orconectes limosus* AKA Striped Crayfish and the Red Swamp Crayfish *Procambarus clarkia* are two. Waiting in the wings in Europe is the Marmokreb Crayfish which if it ever gets here will do more damage than all the others together.

Apart from the threat to the native crayfish, the non-natives burrow into banks causing collapse, predate on invertebrates, fish eggs, fish and vegetation. They are fast breeders and rapidly colonise new waters.

Whilst work continues on control methods, none appear successful to date. Should you find crayfish in your waters the Angling Trust recommends you contact the Environment Agency as soon as possible. The GB Non-Native Species Secretariat is currently drawing up catchment based plans for crayfish. Further details are given on the posters enclosed in this section of the web site. Please feel free to download these and pass on to other members / clubs.

Identification of species can be difficult, whilst adults are relatively easy to tell apart those that are less mature are not. Errors have been made, not only by anglers but also conservationists in telling native crayfish apart from non-natives, it requires careful handling and examination to tell the difference and should only be done by those specifically trained.