

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEET



Photo: Julian Olden, University of Washington.



Photo: John Gunderson, Minnesota Sea Grant.

Common Name: Rusty crayfish

Species: *Orconectes rusticus*

Family: *Cambaridae*

Order: *Decapoda*

Class: *Malacostraca*

Origin: Ohio River Basin (Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois and Indiana).

Size: Three to five inches long.

Description: A medium-sized to large brownish crayfish with large claws and rusty patches on the sides of their carapace. Claw tips are often orange or red with black rings.

Ecology: Found in permanent lakes, ponds and streams. Rusty crayfish prefer areas that have rocks and logs for cover and can utilize all types of substrate.

Status: Prohibited in Oregon.

Interesting facts: Due to their aggressive behavior and large claws, they are unlikely to be consumed by fish. Currently, the only known population west of the Rocky Mountains is in the John Day River, Oregon.

Impact: Competes with Oregon's native signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) for food and resources. Rusty crayfish feed on fish eggs, small fish, aquatic invertebrates and plants. Through overgrazing, they destroy aquatic plant beds, consuming about twice as much as other crayfish species.

Introduction: In 2005, they were discovered in the John Day River, Oregon.

Lifespan: Three to four years.

Reproduction: Breeding begins in late summer, early fall, or spring; eggs are laid in late spring to early summer. Large females can lay up to 575 eggs and they reach maturity at 15 months of age.

Action: Report sightings of rusty crayfish to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program. Do not return any rusty crayfish alive to the water.



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