

AMERICAN SIGNAL CRAYFISH: HELP

STOP THE SPREAD!



WHAT ARE THEY?

Signal crayfish are an invasive North American species of freshwater crustaceans which were introduced to the UK in the 1960's.

WHY ARE THEY A PROBLEM?

Signal crayfish can reach large numbers and will eat nearly anything they can get their claws on. This includes **freshwater invertebrates, plants, fish, fish eggs and amphibians**. Crayfish also often burrow extensively into river banks, causing **bank collapses and erosion**. All this can have devastating impacts on local flora and fauna, so stopping crayfish and preventing further spread is very important!

IF SIGNAL CRAYFISH ARE A PROBLEM, WHY CAN'T WE JUST FISH THEM TO EXTINCTION?

Unfortunately, the problem is more complicated than that! **Fishing alone may not be enough** to get rid of them – despite best efforts, the majority of previous trapping projects have proven ineffective for removing crayfish.

What's more, fishing crayfish may actually **cause several problems**, rather than solving them. There are **TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS** associated with fishing crayfish:

PROBLEM 1: ACCIDENTAL MOVEMENT

Trapping may lead the accidental spread of crayfish to new waters.



Adult Crayfish (5+ years)



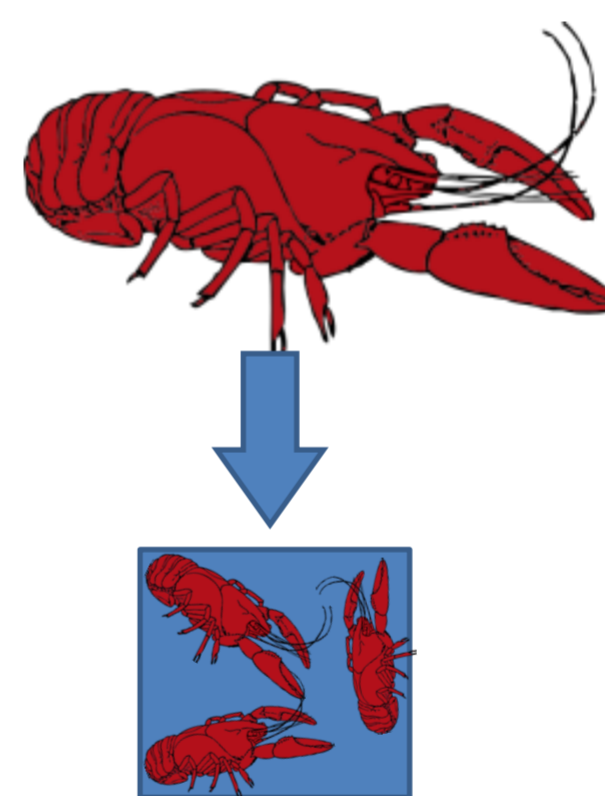
Juvenile Crayfish (2-3 months)

Juvenile crayfish are incredibly small. They can get attached to fishing gear, boats or clothing, and can easily be transported from one place to another, **increasing the risk of crayfish spreading**.

PROBLEM 2: JUVENILE GROWTH SPURT

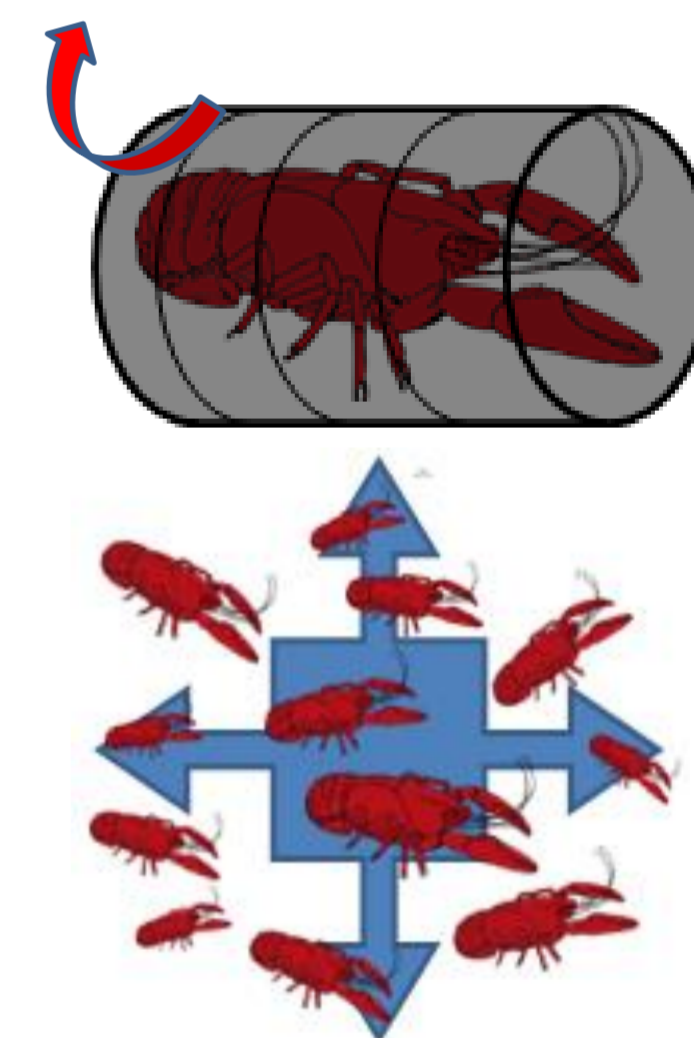
Large crayfish can dominate over smaller crayfish. Since trapping typically targets larger crayfish, this may benefit the juveniles.

NO TRAPPING



Adult crayfish eat the juveniles, or compete with them for food. This may **limit the growth and survival** of juvenile crayfish within the population.

WITH TRAPPING



When adults are removed by trapping, the juveniles may grow and spread rapidly, leading to a **sudden explosion in crayfish numbers**.

Crayfish and the law- It is illegal to:

- Be in possession of a live crayfish or have them under your control without a license
- Release, or allow to escape from captivity, any animal to a place out-with its native range (this includes returning to the wild any signal crayfish that you may have accidentally caught)
- Set a crayfish trap in Scotland without a license.

What can be done?

Do not trap for crayfish. If you see something you think might be a signal crayfish, **report it to the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) on 08452 302050**. **Check, Clean and Dry** all equipment and clothing before using it elsewhere. Aberdeen University researchers are studying some encouraging solutions to the long-term management of this species.