

Signal Crayfish

Scan for more information



Species Description

Scientific name: *Pacifastacus leniusculus*

Native to: North America

Habitat: Most freshwater habitats

Signal crayfish are bluish-brown to reddish-brown, occasionally light to dark-brown in colour and can grow up to 12cm (females) 16cm (Males) in length. Claws are robust and smooth on both surfaces, the underside is red in colour; with a single tubercle on the inner side of the fixed finger; and a white-turquoise patch on top of the junction of fixed and moveable fingers.

Signal crayfish are now widespread across many parts of Europe, but are not present in Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland. They are present in England, Wales and parts of southern Scotland and due to trade and travel links, this is considered the most likely pathway.

Invasive non-native crayfish are known to have a detrimental effect on populations of native white clawed crayfish. American crayfish species can be carriers of the so-called 'crayfish plague', which has been recorded in the Blackwater River, Co. Tyrone and several rivers in Republic of Ireland.

Signal crayfish construct burrows in riverbanks leaving them prone to collapse. This presents a hazard to human health and safety by weakening walkways and riverbanks, and impacting flood defenses. They can also predate on native fish eggs and aquatic invertebrates.

Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is offence to intentionally keep; breed; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange Signal crayfish; or to release it into the environment.



Key ID Features

Turquoise / white blotch on the 'hinge' of the claw



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

