

EA South West Box 11



Preventing the spread of
crayfish plague
in the South West



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

WHERE DO NATIVE CRAYFISH LIVE ?

Up until the 1980s native crayfish were widespread in most river catchments in North and South Wessex and were present in Devon. These areas have seen drastic declines in their populations. They have not been recorded in Cornwall and it is considered that this is because the rivers are too naturally acidic. They are now only known to occur in the Bristol Avon catchment (North Wessex) and the rivers Ebble, Stour and Piddle (South Wessex). Historical records show native crayfish presence on the River Culm and the River Otter in Devon, although current status is unknown. Crayfish are found on the River Yeo and two of its tributaries, the River Creedy and Shobrooke Lake (Exe catchment). Current known distribution is shown on the adjacent map. This decline is largely due to crayfish plague, a virulent fungal disease carried by American signal crayfish.

HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT SPREAD OF PLAGUE ?

To prevent further spread of the plague to remaining populations, you can help as follows:

1. DISINFECT/DRY

Do not move between river catchments without either disinfecting or drying out completely any equipment that has been in contact with river/lake water. This is essential if you are travelling to catchments known to contain native crayfish. Disinfectants (for example an iodophor-based disinfectant used in dairying) that kill plague spores can be obtained from most farm suppliers. It is recommended that angling clubs provide disinfectant bins for all users.

4. HELP MONITOR

If you see any crayfish, use the identification leaflet available from Environment Agency offices to help determine the species and report it to the nearest Agency office. This information will be used to monitor the populations of native and exotic crayfish.

These preventative methods will help contain the further spread of crayfish plague and therefore help to conserve the remaining native populations.
Thank you for helping to conserve this animal.



- Rivers where native crayfish are found
- Rivers where native crayfish are found but current distribution unknown

EA-South West 197-8



Underside of native crayfish, male.



Native crayfish grow to approximately 10cm in length.

2. DO NOT USE CRAYFISH AS LIVEBAIT

It is illegal to remove native crayfish from the wild, and the use of other crayfish species as bait may result in further spread of plague.

3. DO NOT INTRODUCE CRAYFISH INTO THE WILD

Crayfish bought at garden centres and pet shops will not be native and therefore they may carry plague. They must be contained at all times. Do not dispose of unwanted crayfish into rivers and lakes. These should be disposed of using a humane method.

Native crayfish distribution in the South West



SOUTH WEST REGION ADDRESSES

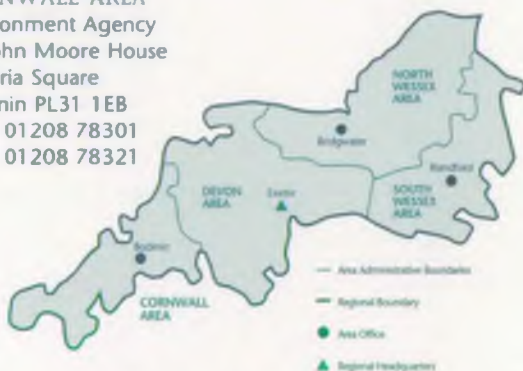
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For general enquiries please call your local Environment Agency office. If you are unsure who to contact, or which is your local office, please call our general enquiry line.

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
GENERAL ENQUIRY LINE**

0645 333 111

The 24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all environmental incidents relating to air, land and water.

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
EMERGENCY HOTLINE**

0800 80 70 60



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SW-3/97-2K-D-AXMC

Designed and produced by Image Makers.
Printed on Envirocote, a 100% recycled paper.
Cover photograph: Dr David Holdich, Nottingham University.