

IT'S A SNAP!

*How to contain your
crayfish and protect
natural areas*



For more information on invasive crayfish or aquatic invaders in the marketplace (AIM), visit:

InvasiveCrayfish.org

TakeAIM.org



**Prairie Research
Institute**

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Invasive Crayfish Collaborative
Great Lakes

LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

**Great Lakes
RESTORATION**

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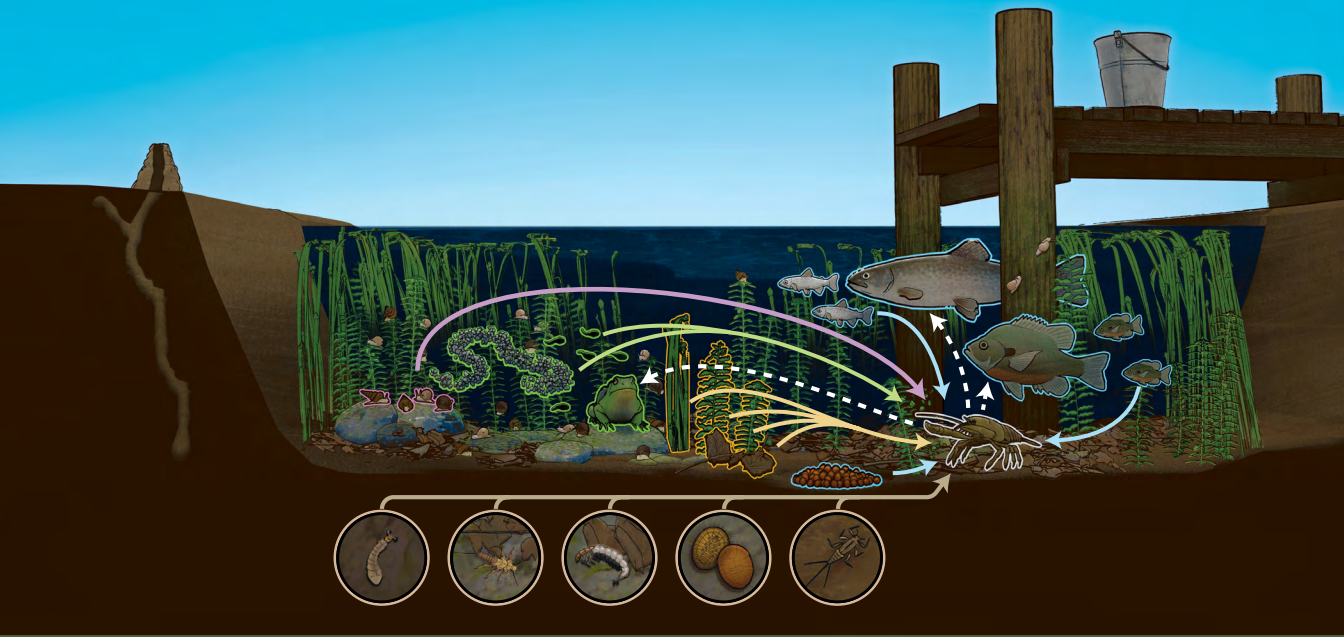
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**Tips for aquarium hobbyists,
teachers, anglers and cooks**



Native crayfish play important roles in aquatic ecosystems...

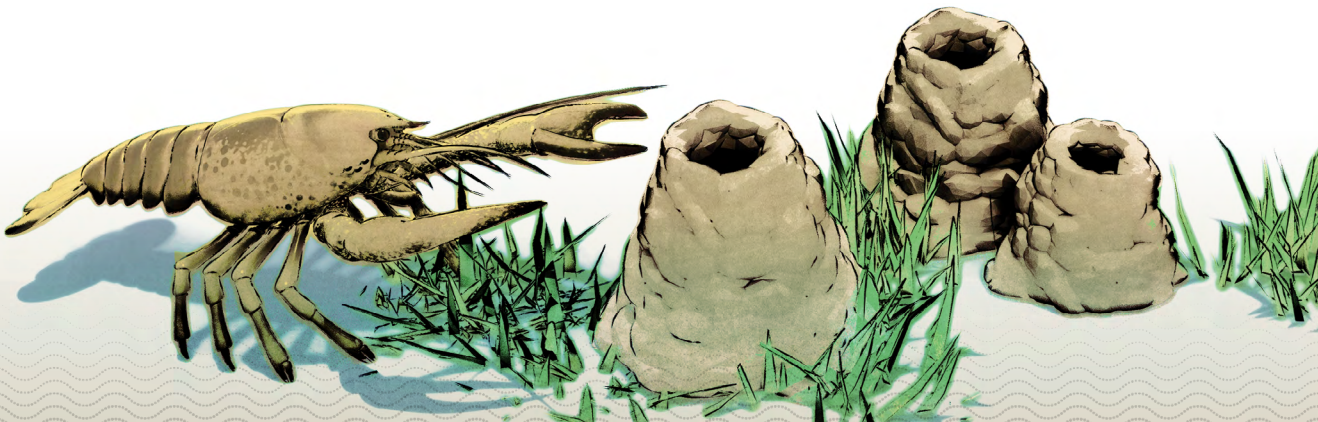


There are many types of crayfish.

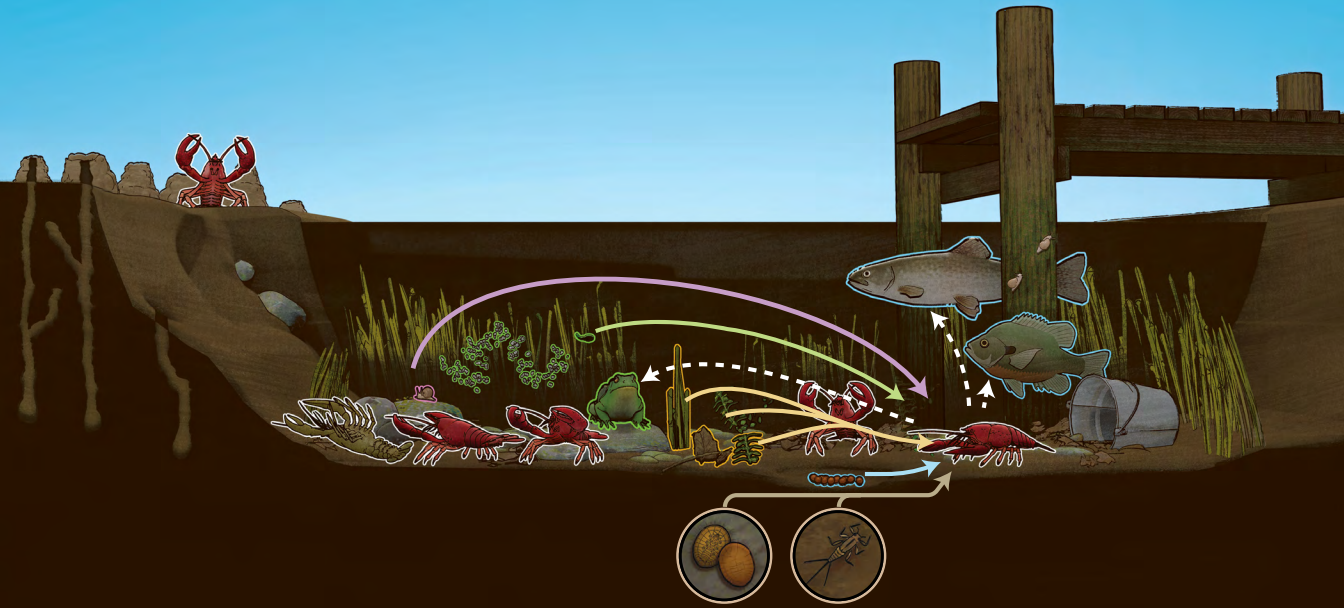
Crayfish, also known as crawfish, crawdads or freshwater lobsters, are ten-legged crustaceans that live in lakes, rivers and ponds. Internationally, there are over 600 crayfish species, and 41 are native to Great Lakes states. Some species are distributed throughout multiple states, while others only inhabit small lakes or short lengths of rivers.

Why are native crayfish important?

Fish, amphibians, birds and mammals all eat crayfish. Crayfish, in turn, eat plants, small animals and debris such as dead leaves. As they eat, crayfish create scraps that other animals can use as food. Crayfish also change the structure of their environment by building extensive burrows, cutting aquatic plants, and rearranging small rocks and sediment. These changes create new habitats for other animals.



// But, non-native crayfish can cause harm!

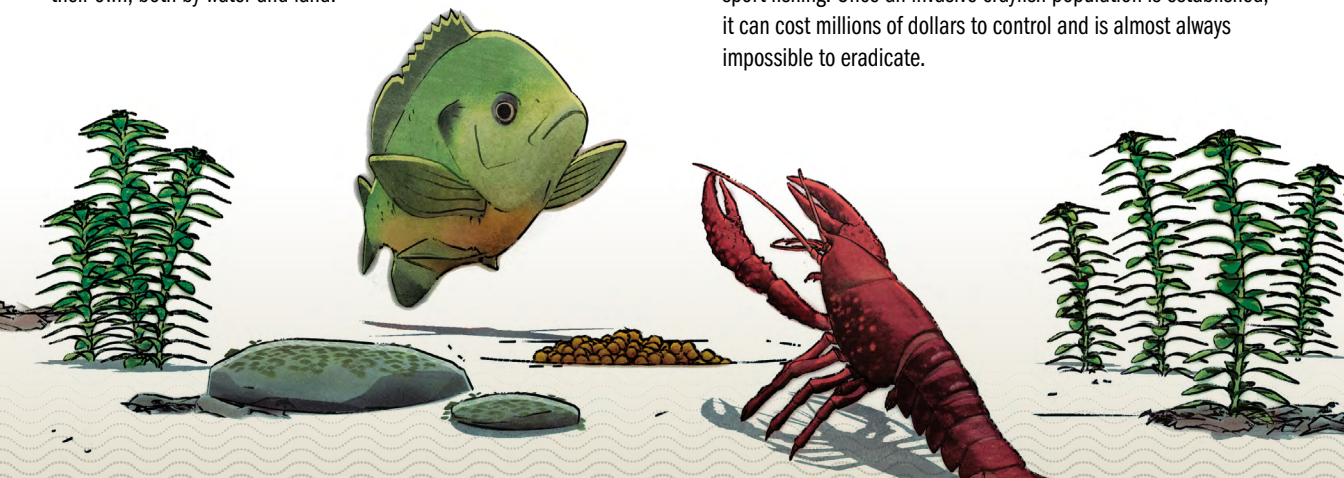


Non-native crayfish are introduced in many ways.

People use crayfish as educational tools in classrooms, eye-catching features to aquariums, live bait for fishing and food products in some regional cuisines. Non-native crayfish are often transported to new areas because of their wide variety of uses. Unfortunately, people sometimes release crayfish or allow them to escape enclosure. Once in a new area, crayfish can spread on their own, both by water and land.

How do non-native crayfish become invasive?

Non-native crayfish that are introduced into new areas can cause ecosystem-wide problems. They can outcompete native crayfish, including many that are endangered or threatened. These invaders eat more, grow bigger and have more offspring, which results in reduced populations of plants, snails, frogs and fish. These environmental impacts harm economies such as those that rely on sport fishing. Once an invasive crayfish population is established, it can cost millions of dollars to control and is almost always impossible to eradicate.



How can I contain the spread of invasive crayfish?

When purchasing crayfish...

- 1** Avoid purchasing invasive crayfish. Some Great Lakes states prohibit the sale of certain crayfish species, including but not limited to, red swamp crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*), rusty crayfish (*Faxonius rusticus*), yabby (*Cherax destructor* or *Cherax albidus*), and marmorkrebs or marbled crayfish (*Procambarus virginalis*). Visit TakeAIM.org to find state and federal regulations and agency contacts.
- 2** Purchase crayfish from a reputable dealer. When possible, purchase species by scientific name because some invasive crayfish are sold with inaccurate common names or simply as “crayfish.”
- 3** Inspect your purchases and remove any unwanted eggs, animals, seeds, plants and plant parts. Dispose of all debris, including packaging, in a sealed plastic bag in the trash.



Once in your possession...



Teachers and Aquarium Owners

Find unwanted pets a new home or contact a veterinarian or pet retailer for guidance on humane disposal of crayfish.

Properly dispose of aquarium water. If disposing of water in a sink or toilet, add ¼ teaspoon of bleach per gallon. Untreated water can be dumped on dry land but never down storm drains, which often lead to local waterways.



Cooks and Farmers

When cooking crayfish, keep crayfish contained in bags or boxes until you are ready to cook them. Any extra crayfish can be boiled, peeled and frozen for consumption on a later day.

Follow all federal, state and local regulations related to crayfish farming practices. Visit TakeAIM.org to find state and federal regulations and agency contacts.



Live Bait Anglers

Never release crayfish caught from one waterbody into another.

Dispose of any unwanted bait in the trash.

Drain all water from your bait bucket before traveling from one location to the next.