

# Invasive Species Alert

## Red Swamp Crayfish

(*Procambarus clarkii*)

\*Not detected in Michigan\*

### Identification:

- Dark red color with bright red raised spots, look like small lobsters
- Elongated claws and bony exoskeleton
- Elongated head with a triangular rostrum
- 2.2 inches – 4.7 inches in length

**Habitat:** Red swamp crayfish live in a variety of permanent freshwater habitats. Crayfish are crustaceans that burrow deep into the substrate of their habitat and create large mounds of sand and soil called chimneys with a relatively large hole in the center.



Photo by Chris Lukhaup

**Diet:** Crayfish feed heavily on snails, fish, amphibians, and plants.



© Simon Davey 2010

**Native Range:** Mississippi river drainage and Gulf coast

**U.S. Distribution (outside of native range):** Established populations in California, Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. Introduced but not established in Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Nevada, and New York.

**Local Concern:** Red swamp crayfish compete aggressively with native crayfish species for food and habitat. Feeding behavior reduces the amount of available habitat for amphibians, invertebrates, and juvenile fish. Burrowing and foraging behavior can also lead to summer cyanobacteria blooms and eutrophic conditions.

**Other Names:** Louisiana crayfish/crawfish

**Potential Means of Introduction:** Aquaculture/aquarium trade, classroom/laboratory release, live bait dumping, small chance of introduction through fish stocking events

**Native look-alikes and how you can tell them apart from red swamp crayfish:**

- ✓ **Devil crawfish:** mostly tan body with red highlights around head, body, and claws
- ✓ **White river crayfish:** color may vary from tan to rusty red color, no bright red bumps

Report this species to Seth Herbst, MDNR, at [herbsts1@michigan.gov](mailto:herbsts1@michigan.gov) or 517-284-5841 or at [www.misin.msu.edu](http://www.misin.msu.edu) or download the MISIN app to your smartphone