Invasive Species Alert

RUSTY CRAYFISH

(FAXONIUS RUSTICUS)

RESTRICTED IN MICHIGAN

IDENTIFICATION:

- Lobster-like, brown body, up to 6 inches with claws.
- Oversized claws have an oval opening when closed and black bands at tips.
- Mature crayfish have a dark, rusty spot on each side of the carapace.

HABITAT: Permanent water bodies with cover of rocks, logs or trees. Rusty crayfish do not burrow.

DIET: Rusty crayfish are voracious eaters, consuming 2-3 times as much per day as native crayfish. Rusty crayfish eat plants, snails, clams, insects, other crayfish, fish eggs and small fish.

NATIVE RANGE: Ohio River basin including parts of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana.

U.S. DISTRIBUTION: Great Lakes states, New England south to North Carolina and Tennessee, western states including Colorado, Wyoming and Oregon. Also present in Ontario, Canada.

MICHIGAN DISTRIBUTION: Rusty crayfish are widespread and established in Michigan.

LOCAL CONCERN: Rusty crayfish destroy aquatic plant beds, affecting the fish and organisms that require this habitat. Their broad diet can impact native populations and ecosystems and limit habitat and food sources used by native crayfish.

MEANS OF INTRODUCTION: Rusty crayfish are collected and used as bait and have been transferred by this means to many water bodies throughout Michigan and the U.S.

REPORT THIS SPECIES: Visit MISIN.MSU.edu or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone.

Photos courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey Bugwood.org (top) and Doug Watkinson Fisheries and Oceans Canada (bottom)