

# RUSTY CRAYFISH

(*Orconectus rusticus*)

Oneida Lake Status:  
Common



Rusty crayfish  
USGS

- Discovered in Oneida Lake in 2005
- Larger than native crayfish
- Consumes more food than native crayfish due to its higher metabolic rate

Rusty crayfish are native to streams in Ohio, Kentucky, and eastern Indiana (see brown areas on map below). They may have been introduced to Oneida Lake by anglers who used them as bait. Although rusty crayfish were first noted in Oneida Lake in 2005, they were likely present for several years before.

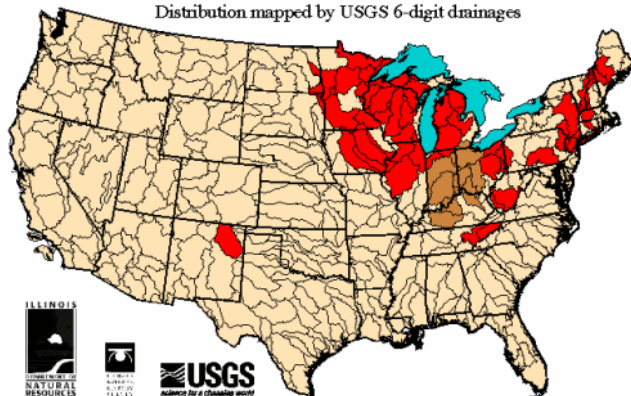


A male rusty crayfish from Wisconsin  
Brian Roth

Rusty crayfish are brown with large black-tipped claws and a rust-colored spot on each side of their bodies. Adults range from 2 – 8 inches long. Rusty crayfish are aggressive and may outcompete native crayfish for food and habitat. That combined with their larger size may result in less food availability or shifts in diet for fish such as black bass. In lakes that are less productive, rusty crayfish have the potential to severely deplete aquatic plants, one of their preferred foods.

## Rusty crayfish

Distribution mapped by USGS 6-digit drainages



Data source: Chris Taylor - Illinois Natural History Survey.  
Map produced by: Nonindigenous Aquatic Species Program,  
USGS, Gainesville, FL, March 1999.

■ Drainages with native populations  
■ Drainages with introduced populations

Prepared by:

**Kristen Holeck and Ed Mills**  
Cornell Biological Field Station

Edited June 2013