



Crayfish are the largest and most mobile freshwater invertebrate. White clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* are the only species native to the UK. It is widespread in clean, calcareous streams, rivers and lakes in England and Wales. It favours overhanging banks and takes refuge beneath cobbles, rocks and vegetation and digs burrows into muddy banks. It can be distinguished from other crayfish by its pinkish-white underside. Their average length is 12cm but males have larger claws and females wider abdomens for carrying the brood.

Since the early 1980s populations have been eliminated by crayfish plague, a disease caused by the fungus *Aphanomyces astaci*. This is carried by the non-native American signal crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*. Spores from the fungus are transmitted by a variety of means, including water, fish, netting equipment and footwear. The signal crayfish is larger and is more successful at competing for food and habitat. The signal crayfish are also scattered throughout the county, with a concentrated population in Bodenham. Populations of white clawed crayfish are scattered throughout the county, with no concentrated stronghold.

Threats

- Crayfish plague
- Non-native crayfish direct competition for food and habitat
- Reduction in suitable habitat
- Fragmentation of habitat
- Habitat modification and management of waterbodies
- Pollution and poor water quality
- Habitat loss through development

Current Action

- Research and survey - INNS (EA, NE)
- UK White Clawed Crayfish Group (UKBAP)
- Crayfish breeding scheme (NRW)
- Sch 5 WCA: Appendix III BC and Annexes II & V EC HD
- River habitat improvements – WHIP, SOS, LLL, CS (HWT, WUF, NE, FH, MRA, EA)

	Objective	Action
A	Locate and map existing populations of white clawed and signal crayfish	1
B	Maintain viable populations	3,5
C	Ensure habitat is not lost to development	1,2
D	Stop non-native crayfish affecting vital populations	4,5
E	Ensure non-native crayfish are not released near populations	4

	Actions	Target
1	Map distribution and establish monitoring	Annual
2	Inform land managers of best practice on and near known sites	Annual
3	Maintain existing colonies and increase numbers through research and funded projects	2020
4	Share advice on biosecurity to limit the spread of crayfish plague	2020
5	Access funds for breedings, translocation and establishment of Ark site	2020

Lead Partner	NE
Key Partners	EA, WUF, HWT