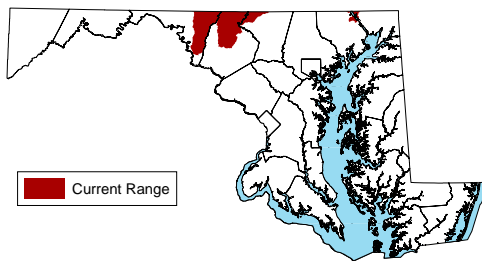


Rusty Crayfish

Orconectes rusticus

- Identification** Conspicuous reddish-brown spot on the sides of the body near the tail; only species in Maryland with smooth mandibles (“teeth”).
- Why is it a Problem?** Highly aggressive; displaces native species; consumes aquatic vegetation; eats eggs of game fish.



- Range/Habitat** Native to portions of the Ohio River; introduced in the Middle Potomac, Upper Potomac, and Lower Susquehanna River basins; inhabits riffles and pools, generally under large flat rocks, coarse woody debris, submerged aquatic vegetation, and detritus.

- Similar Species** Can be distinguished from other species of crayfish by reddish-brown spots on its sides.
- Legal Status** Prohibited from being removed from the waters of one watershed and introduced into the waters of another watershed. In the Middle Potomac River, Upper Potomac River, and Susquehanna River basins crayfish must be killed upon capture.
- Method of Introduction** This species has been introduced through the release of unused bait by anglers.
- Control and Prevention** To help prevent the further spread of rusty crayfish:
1) Never release live, unused bait; 2) Do not transport live crayfish from one body of water to another; 3) Educate others about the problems of bait bucket introductions and invasive species; 4) Learn how to identify rusty crayfish

Want to know more? Check out www.dnr.maryland.gov for more on invasive species in Maryland and what you can do about it.