

Crayfish, Unidentified

Decapoda (order)

Freshwater
Ponds, Lakes, Rivers, and Streams

Crayfish experts want to know where you find ANY species of crayfish in Maine

Identification



Photo by Karen Wilson, USM



Crayfish experts use the very small first set of pleopods on male crayfish to figure out what species it is.

CRAYFISH CHARACTERISTICS

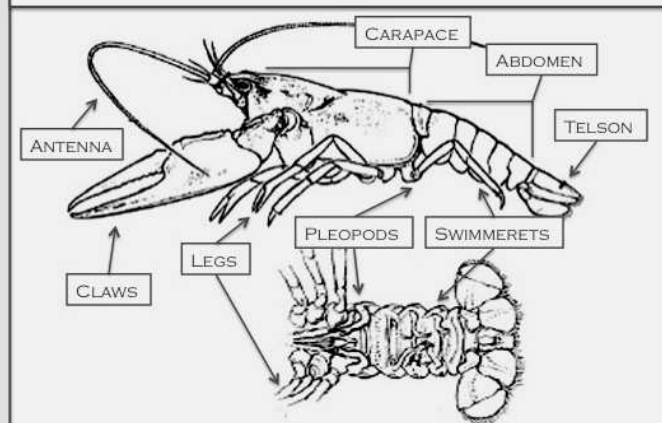


Diagram artwork by D.W. Crocker and D.W. Bar, UT

It is very difficult to tell crayfish species apart. If possible, take careful close-up photos of the pleopods for a crayfish expert to use to help you identify it.

Full View



Photo by Vearl Brown, www.flickr.com



Crayfish have two sensory antennae, four pairs of walking legs, one pair of claws specialized for cutting, capturing food, attacking, and defense, and five pairs of swimmerets. Crayfish can regenerate body parts that break off.

Additional Characteristics



Photo by Marcus Beard, www.flickr.com



Crayfish have an exoskeleton like crabs and lobsters and molt several times a year. Crayfish hide under rocks until the new shell is hard. If you find a soft crayfish be careful and make sure it has a place to hide when you let it go.

Native Species

<i>Cambarus bartonii</i>	Appalachain Brook
<i>Orconectes limosus</i>	Spinycheek
<i>Orconectes virilis</i>	Virile
<i>Orconectes immunis</i>	Calico (probably native)

Invasive Species

<i>Orconectes obscurus</i>	Obscure
<i>Orconectes rusticus</i>	Rusty
<i>Procambarus acutus</i>	White River
<i>Procambarus clarkii</i>	Red Swamp

Fun Fact

People are primarily responsible for introducing crayfish to different ponds and streams where they are not native. People sell crayfish as live bait for sport fishing. Crayfish are also popular as pets. When people get tired of pet crayfish, they often release them into their local pond or stream.



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