

## Invasive non native species: Signal

### Crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*)

The Signal Crayfish is larger than our native white clawed crayfish, reaching 16-18cm in length with red undersides to its claws. The white-ish patch at the claw hinge, like a signalman's flag, gives this species its name. It is well established in streams, rivers, lakes and ponds.



Signal crayfish were originally introduced to farm for food, but have escaped and been released.

**Environmental impact:** Signal Crayfish transmit crayfish plague and outcompete the native species. They have driven the native crayfish to extinction throughout much of the South of England. Although we have Signal Crayfish in Yorkshire, there are also uninvaded rivers and

tributaries where the native White Clawed Crayfish thrives. It is important therefore to prevent the spread of the Signal Crayfish.

**Economic impact:** they overwinter in burrows in river banks which can be over 2m long and interconnect causing bank weakness; this can cause problems for livestock, nearby buildings and flooding. They prey upon fish eggs which can reduce the value of commercial fisheries.

**Management, control and treatment of infestations of Signal Crayfish in England is £1.5million a year (half of that is spent on management).**

**Biosecurity:** you can help stop the spread of invasive non native species, which can cause problems and are expensive to treat, through the following actions:

**CHECK** your equipment, clothing and footwear

**CLEAN** everything thoroughly, use hot water if possible

**DRY** everything, as some species can survive for up to two weeks in damp conditions



Image credits: Trevor Renals, Ayresshire Rivers Trust, Matt Brazier (EA),



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

