

Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*)



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ORIGIN: North America

INTRODUCED TO EUROPE: 1860s

IMPORTED WAYS AND IMPORTED VECTORS: Deliberately released to fill population gaps of native crayfish.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS: Its name comes from a more or less pronounced white-turquoise spot on the joint of the scissor finger, the underside of the claws is red and serves as a warning color when lifting the claws.

BIOLOGY: The signal crayfish prefers to live in cool, slightly alkaline flowing waters (pH 7-8). Compared to the European crayfish, it tolerates higher water temperatures and is also more tolerant of organic and chemical water pollution. The signal crayfish is a potential vector of the fungal disease "crayfish plague", but it is immune to this disease itself. However, native crayfish species die from this disease. The signal crayfish grows faster, becomes sexually mature earlier, is more aggressive than native crayfish and displaces them. It also colonizes new habitats more quickly due to its high migration potential. The signal crayfish digs living burrows in the shore area of colonized waters.

STATUS: Signal crayfish have already established themselves as part of the fauna in many water bodies in Europe. Spreading to other uninhabited waters should be avoided if possible.