

Guide for Identifying Crayfish in Idaho

Pilose Crayfish

(*Pacifastacus gambelii*)

Distinguishing Features

- Patches of little hairs on the edges of their claws.
- Broader, less-pointed, more obtuse rostrum.
- Long palms relative to overall claw length, making the chelae look stubbier relative to those of *P. connectens*.
- Lines on the back between the head and tail do not touch at the middle of the back.
- Found in the upper Snake River watershed, upstream of south-central Idaho and in the neighboring Bonneville Basin.



Snake River Pilose Crayfish

(*Pacifastacus connectens*)

Distinguishing Features

- Patches of small hairs on the edges of their claws.
- Narrow, acute, pointed rostrum.
- Long, movable finger relative to overall chela length, making the claws look more slender than those of the *P. gambelii*.
- Lines on the back between the head and tail do not touch at the middle of the back.
- Found in the middle Snake River watershed downstream of south-central Idaho and in the neighboring Harney Basin of southeastern Oregon.



Signal Crayfish

(*Pacifastacus leniusculus*)

Distinguishing Features

- Body and claws are smooth; no little bumps or hairs.
- Lines on the back (between the head and tail) do not touch at the middle of the back.
- White or turquoise or otherwise light-colored patch usually found at the base of each claw joint.
- **Highly variable coloration. Dark brown to orange to red to drab green to blue.**
- Usually found in rocky crevices or woody debris in streams, not often in muddy/clay-banked streams.



Red Swamp Crayfish

(*Procambarus clarkii*)

Distinguishing Features

- Lines that meet on back in the middle between head and tail.
- Tend to be deep red in color.
- Body and top of the claws are covered with small bumps.
- Non-native to the western United States; recent sightings in Lewiston, Idaho.
- Dig into stream and pond banks, causing erosion, and have triggered drastic fish population declines in parts of Africa.



Rusty Crayfish

(*Faxonius rusticus*)

Distinguishing Features

- Reddish-brown (rusty-looking) patches on the sides of the body plates.
- Claws have little bumps, especially on the inside edges, and often have orange tips.
- Wide gap in the claw pincers when closed.
- Originally from Ohio and Kentucky. Presently found in the John Day River of Oregon and are heading toward the Columbia River.
- Tend to live in higher densities within streams than native crayfish.



Virile (Northern) Crayfish

(*Faxonius virilis*)

Distinguishing Features

- Brown, tan, or olive-green body; several different shades of those colors can be present on one crayfish.
- Lines on the back between the head and tail come close together, but do not touch at the middle of the back.
- Claws tend to be green or blue green with large, yellow bumps. Tips of the claws may be light orange.
- Native to a large area of the Midwest east of the Continental Divide. Currently are widespread throughout the West and are found in pockets in Idaho.

