

Different aspects of reproduction strategies in crayfish: A review



Study of the reproductive strategy of crayfish species is of great importance in the current astacological world. Crayfish are among the largest freshwater invertebrates, and as keystone species, they are able to regulate the structure of the benthic fauna in the freshwaters, demonstrating different ecological strategies and life spans ranging up to 20+ years. In order to bring together the various pieces of information related to this issue, this overview of published scientific reports was conducted. The majority of crayfish species studied show sexual dimorphism, with approximately equal numbers of males and females. However, over some decades numerous observations have been made for a few species that may have different modes of reproduction, such as hermaphroditism or intersex (e.g. Cherax quadricarinatus, Samastacus spinifrons, Parastacus virilastacus and Pacifastacus leniusculus) and parthenogenesis (only Procambarus fallax f. virginalis). A recent study showed a new case of parthenogenesis as apomictic parthenogenesis (only Orconectes limosus). In addition, there are many investigations into the reproduction biology of crayfish, including using eyestalk ablation or androgenic gland ablation under various lab conditions and hybridization under natural conditions (e.g. Astacus astacus X Astacus leptodactylus, Orconectes rusticus X Orconectes propinquus). There are also some chemical factors which could possibly affect the reproduction system of crayfish in the wild.

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