

CRAYFISH MANAGEMENT FOR SWISS WATERS



Seven species of crayfish are present in Swiss waters: three native ones (*Astacus astacus*, *Austropotamobius pallipes*, *Austropotamobius torrentium*) and four exotic ones (*Astacus leptodactylus*, *Orconectes limosus*, *Pacifastacus leniusculus*, *Procambarus clarkii*). The occurrence of each species is known and distribution maps have been drawn at national level. Many of the non-native populations have been identified as carriers of the crayfish plague, acting as a vector for *Aphanomyces astaci*. Crayfish are regulated by the Swiss Fisheries Legislation. The catching of the native species is allowed but the effective fishing pressure is low. The non-native species are considered as undesirable. For that reason importation, introduction and transportation of live specimens are forbidden with the exception of *Cherax* sp. which may be kept in cool boxes without any contact with water until consumption. A national management plan has been developed by the Federal Office for the Environment. It aims at increasing protective measures for the native species and enhancing population control for the non-native ones. The elimination measures are targeted on the most problematic species *Pacifastacus leniusculus* and *Procambarus clarkii*.

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