



Please help prevent the spread of invasive species in Wood County.

Contact us if you see any invasive species or want to become involved in any of the projects.

EDUCATION IS KEY!



Rusty Wranglers Project

This summer the Wood County Land Conservation Department and the Parks and Forestry Department are asking for help in removing the Rusty's out of the Yellow River, which flows directly into North Wood County Park. The reason behind removing these invasive critters from these waters is that they are starting to degrade the fish habitat, along with that of many other aquatic wildlife plants and animals.

There are catching nets available near the camp host station, which can be checked out and used to capture the crayfish. Upon catching the crayfish, we are asking that you place them in the provided plastic bags, and return the captured crayfish back to the camp ground host station along with the net that you may have used. For the children, there will be certificates available to award them for their efforts!

The crayfish that are caught will not be wasted, rather they will be sent to a wildlife rehabilitation center in Green Bay, Wisconsin. This center has many animals that would enjoy eating the crayfish you help us remove! :)



Rusty Crayfish North Wood County Park Trapping Project



**Wood County Land
Conservation Department
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Rusty Crayfish ***Orconectes rusticus***

HOW TO ID

Average 2 1/2 inches in length not including claws, which can average 2-3 inches themselves. Large claws with black bands and dark red/rusty spots on each side of the carapace (hard outer body covering). Claws are grayish-green to reddish-brown. Prefer bottom types of clay, silt, sand, gravel or rock. Like rocks, logs and other debris to hide around. Rusty crayfish need permanent water bodies that provide suitable water quality year round.



LIFECYCLE

Rusty Crayfish reproduce quickly and females lay from 80-575 eggs. Eggs are attached to the swimmerets on the underside of the crayfish abdomen or tail section until the hatch, pictured below. Once the water temperatures rise the rusty crayfish eggs begin to hatch around late April or May.



WHY BAD

Rusty Crayfish displace native crayfish through three primary ways: 1.) Crayfish to crayfish competition. Our natives don't stand a chance against these bigger more aggressive invaders. 2.) Increased fish predation on native crayfish. Rusty crayfish force native crayfish out of the good hiding spots making them easier targets. Rusty crayfish are bigger with larger claws so fish go after native crayfish because they are easier to get. 3.) Rusty crayfish eat twice as much as a native crayfish so there is no food left for the natives.

WHY SHOULD I CARE

Rusty crayfish tend to eat most aquatic plants in a water body, these plants help prevent erosion. The loss of these plants destroy fish habitat along with quality of the lake. Because of their increased aggressiveness fish will only eat native crayfish not rusty crayfish. Rusty's eat twice as much as native crayfish, including fish eggs, small fish and invertebrates (animals with no backbone) which affects the food chain for the bigger fish. With a higher ratio of exoskeleton to soft tissue the food quality with rusty crayfish is not as high as the invertebrates they are replacing. With less food and lower quality food, fish survival will decrease.



WHAT WE CAN DO

Intensive trapping will not eradicate rusty crayfish but may help reduce adult populations and minimize some impacts. When the rusty crayfish population decreases; aquatic plants, invertebrates and fish populations increase. If you think you found a rusty crayfish infestation, contact the Wood County Land Conservation Office.

BEST METHOD IS TO PREVENT INTRODUCTION.



QUICK FACTS

- Came from Ohio River Basin and have expanded in WI since 1960
- Dark red/rusty spots on each side of the carapace
- Body average length of 2 1/2 inches long, claws average length of 2-3 inches long.
- Females lay 80-575 eggs
- Eat twice as much as native crayfish
- Displace native crayfish by: direct competition, increased fish predation, and lack of food
- Best method of control is not to introduce in the first place.