

Ch.0 Proposed Regulation Change Red Swamp Crayfish

Ty Petersburg - Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement

Josh Nehring - Assistant Aquatic Section Manager



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Background Information

- CPW Received information Regarding the Illegal Importation of Crayfish from Louisiana in February 2023
- During early portions of investigating multiple tips, CPW learned that much of advertising and communication was based through social media panels



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Background Information

- CPW regulations largely operates under the idea of a “White List”
- PWC Reg #012 Possession of Aquatic Wildlife
 - C.2. a. The following crustaceans may be possessed east of the Continental Divide:
 - i. Virile Crayfish
 - ii. Waternymph Crayfish
 - iii. Calico Crayfish
 - iv. Ringed Crayfish
 - v. Southern Plains Crayfish
 - b. The following crustaceans may be possessed on either side of the Continental Divide:
 - i. Freshwater shrimp
 - ii. Commercially available brine shrimp
 - iii. Commercially available krill
- 33-6-114.5. Native and nonnative fish -possession, transportation, importation, exportation, and release -penalties.



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Background Information

Over the following months, CPW determined that:

1. The primary species being illegally imported was Red Swamp Crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*)
2. Seasonal demand is generally January through August
3. Dozens of distributors and restaurants were operating within Colorado, and hundreds of private citizens and groups were actively importing Red Swamp Crayfish
4. Thousands of pounds were being imported weekly- one distributor alone was importing ~ 4 - 5 TONS weekly



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Social & Economic Considerations

- Colorado has a significant market already established
- Concern over this prohibition largely social media driven
- CPW and CDA received hundreds of unsolicited tips, questions and concerns
- Interested parties contacting CPW/CDA include:
 - distributors- both mobile and brick & mortar
 - restaurants
 - private citizens and neighborhood groups
 - schools
 - charities



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CPW Information Gathering

A Subgroup formed to look into the issue further:

- Law Enforcement, Aquatics, Human Dimensions, Special Licensing, Colorado Dept of Ag, Attorney General's Office
- Coordination with Fish Health Board, LA Dept of Ag, Industry, others
- Public Engagement through Engage CPW
- Thorough literature review on the biology and ecology of Red Swamp Crayfish



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Biological & Ecological Considerations

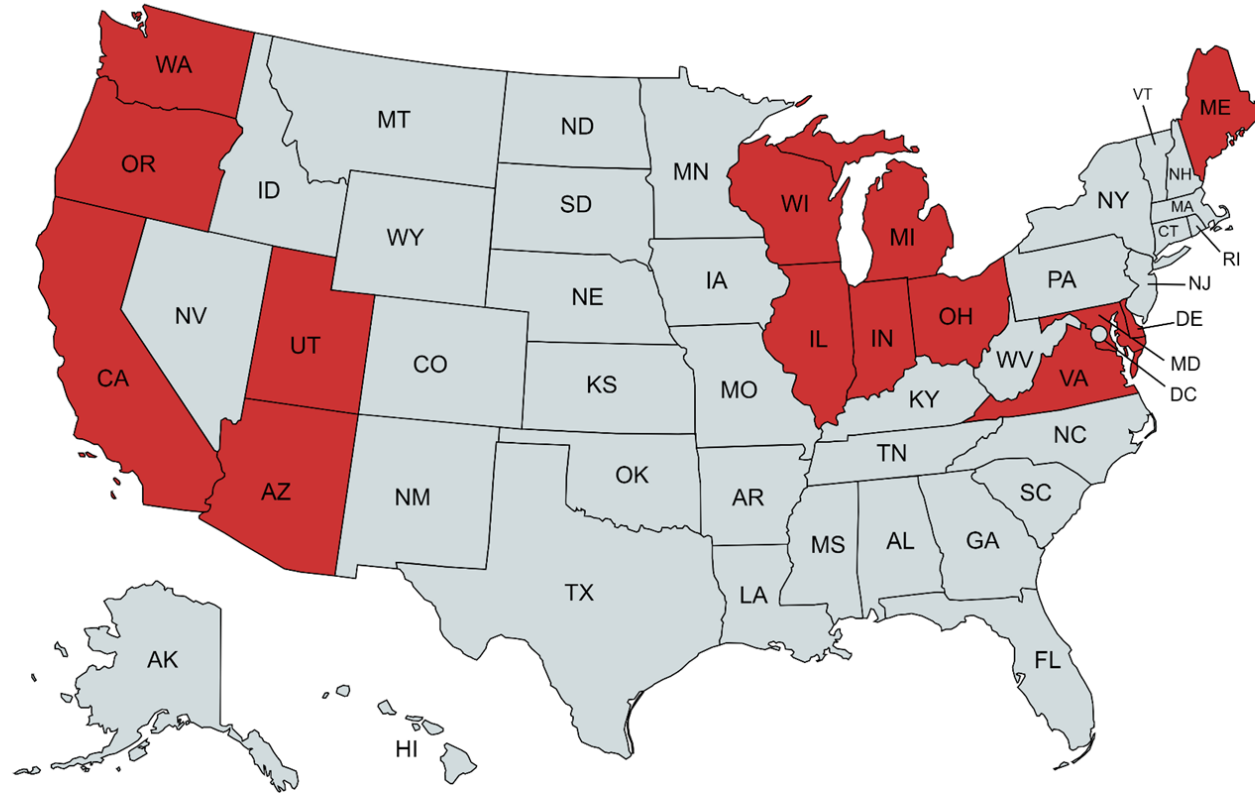


Native Range (tan shading); Collection Records (diamonds)



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Biological & Ecological Considerations



Red Swamp Crayfish Established Populations



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Biological & Ecological Considerations

Status in Colorado

- Despite large shipments (10K+ lbs / week during spring season)
 - CPW has no records of the species in the wild
 - CPW staff does not actively monitor crayfish



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Biological & Ecological Considerations

Thermal Tolerance

- Tolerates temperatures just above freezing to over 90°F
- Prefers temperatures 70 - 86°F



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Biological & Ecological Considerations

Diet

- Opportunistic omnivore
 - detritus (dead organic material), insects, other crayfish, snails, fish, fish eggs

Introduction and Establishment Risks

- Number of individuals released
- Condition of individuals
- Habitat including water temperatures
- Predators
- Time of year



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Biological & Ecological Considerations

Potential impact

- Native crayfish populations
- Native fish populations
- Sportfish populations
- Habitat alteration
- Infrastructure (dams, levees, water control structures)



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Discussion

- Extremely complex issue, with biological, ecological, social and economic factors involved
- Importation has largely been unchecked; possibly resulting in hundreds of tons of illegally imported crayfish annually
- “Engage CPW” received hundreds of comments- showing approximately 2/3 of respondents favored some measure of legalizing import
- Attempt to balance competing interests AND create a reasonable mechanism to track import and ability to handle enforcement



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Regulation Changes

- b. The following crustaceans may be possessed on either side of the Continental Divide:
 - i. Freshwater shrimp
 - ii. Commercially available brine shrimp
 - iii. Commercially available krill
 - iv. Subject to the requirements of #010 and #011, Red Swamp Crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*) for purposes of importing, transporting, or possessing the species for human consumption, provided the following criteria are satisfied:
 - a. no person may possess an individual of the species alive for more than 72 hours; and
 - b. any person who possesses the species alive must have:
 - i. a copy of an importation license issued under #011 that authorizes the importation of the crayfish in the person's possession; and
 - ii. a receipt or delivery confirmation reflecting the date the person took possession of the crayfish.



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