



North American signal crayfish are very distinctive, 'lobster-like' creatures which were introduced to Britain about 20 years ago for fish farming.

Crayfish are not native to Scotland and there are no other crayfish-like animals in Scottish rivers and lochs.

Signal crayfish have a very varied diet but feed mainly on fish eggs, small fish, other crustaceans and vegetation.

They are very resilient and will voluntarily leave the water to travel over land in search of food or a new habitat.

Because they are so destructive to native freshwater life it is illegal (unless you possess a licence) to move or transport live signal crayfish in the UK. This includes returning to the wild any signal crayfish that you may have accidentally caught.

If you take one from the water – accidentally or otherwise – do not take it away alive. Kill it humanely by placing it on a hard surface. Then hit it with a single lethal blow with a heavy or hard object, or crush it with a single action.



Scottish Natural Heritage

All of nature for all of Scotland

This leaflet was produced and published by Scottish Natural Heritage.

Why?

To alert you to the dangers that this animal presents to your sport and the native wildlife of Scotland. They burrow into, and undermine, riverbanks and this can present a danger to livestock and humans. They also compete for space in rivers and lochs with native fish, particularly juvenile salmon and trout.

What are SNH doing about them?

SNH and other organisations are engaged in research and control programmes which aim to halt the spread of this non-native pest.

How can I help?

By following the simple precautions in this leaflet.

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North American signal crayfish

Casting a shadow over your sport, your leisure and your wildlife!





Canoeist

When you have finished for the day, but before you leave...

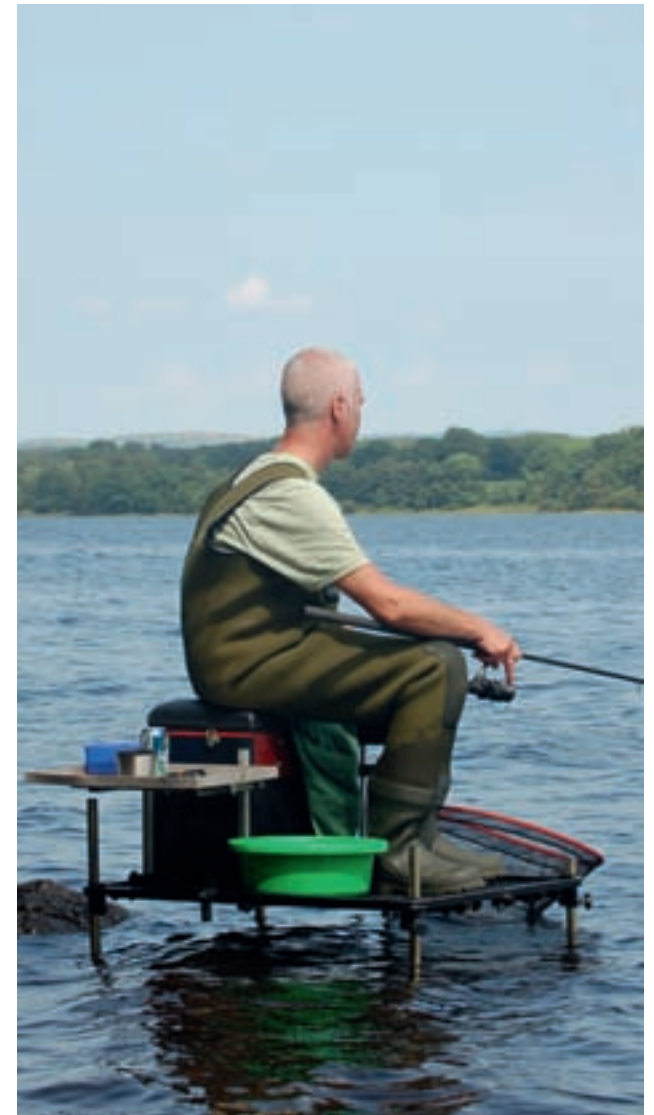
- drain your boat as usual
- check the interior for any obvious crayfish (remember that capsizes?)
- young crayfish can be only 1cm in length
- if it's possible, flush the boat out with fresh water from a piped supply before you leave



Boater

At the end of the day...

- check the bilge and interior for any obvious crayfish
- if you are taking your powerboat away, if it's possible, flush the engine cooling system through with fresh water from a piped supply
- check the boat exterior for young – especially important with clinker built boats



Angler

Remember to...

- check your landing and keep nets before you leave
- if you catch any crayfish – bring them ashore or into the boat for humane destruction

North American signal

crayfish

ruining our sport, wildlife, rivers and lochs

If you take one from the water – accidentally or otherwise – do not take it away alive. Kill it humanely by placing it on a hard surface. Then hit it with a single lethal blow with a heavy or hard object, or crush it with a single action. This advice has been accepted by the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

What's the problem? American signal crayfish cause great damage to riverbanks and spawning beds. They are voracious predators and pose a real threat to many British species of fish and other freshwater life.

What does the law say? The law is clear – a licence is needed to deliberately catch them or transport them alive.

What can I do with any I kill? It's safer not to return the carcass to the water. If it is a female it may be carrying eggs.

Can I release any live? No, it is illegal to return live animals to the water or land.

I saw one, but didn't catch it. What should I do? Your sighting could be important. Please take the time to tell Scottish Natural Heritage, phone our freshwater Advisor on 0141 951 4488, email us at enquiries@snh.org.uk – tell us where, when and how many.



Scottish Natural Heritage
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Loch Ken Advisory
Management
Committee



Dumfries
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SEPA
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