Native to North America this species is found in most freshwater habitats. Their small lobster-like appearance makes crayfish easy to recognise. Compared to the native species, the signal crayfish is much larger and its claws are red underneath with a small turquoise / white blotch on the surface.

Signal Crayfish mate in the autumn and females carry the dense clutch of 200-400 eggs on the underside of their tail over the winter. Once hatched, the young remain attached to the females until May-June. The young resemble adults and are able to feed on most animal and plant food.

Signal crayfish are sexually mature at the age of 2-3 years and can live up to 20 years.

**How did it get here?** The signal crayfish was introduced to be farmed for food in 1976, but escaped through water courses and across land.

**Distribution:** now widespread across England and Wales the distribution in Scotland is limited, with populations becoming established at several locations. They are capable of moving both up and downstream and have been recorded to move 341m in two days.

**Impact:** complete loss of the native crayfish through the spread of disease and direct competition. Also undermines riverbanks through burrowing and can predate on native fish eggs and aquatic invertebrates.

**Eradication:** No known effective techniques.

Information taken from GB Non-native Species Secretariat.
Crayfish in Addingham becks

- In the past the native **white-clawed crayfish** (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) was common in Town Beck.
- It still occurs in many headwaters in the Dales but no longer occurs in our becks.
- It disappeared in the 1990s at more or less the same time as the marked decrease in brown trout populations occurred.

- Signal crayfish escaped from Kilnsey Fish farm in 1990 and slowly spread downstream arriving in Town Beck 27 years later.
- The first American **signal crayfish** was recorded in 2007 in Town Beck by Derek Law.
- They are now abundant in Town Beck and have been seen as far upstream as the Sailor Public House.
- If you see crayfish in the beck please let us know with date and location ([aeg@addingham.info](mailto:aeg@addingham.info)).
- You must avoid helping the spread of signal crayfish by following biosecurity guidelines.

**BIOSECURITY**

- **CHECK** Check equipment and clothing
- **CLEAN** Clean and wash equipment and footwear
- **DRY** Dry equipment, clothing and footwear

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**Signal crayfish sightings in Addingham**

- Signal crayfish, Town Beck 2018

(photo: Rick Battarbee)