

Red Burrowing Crayfish

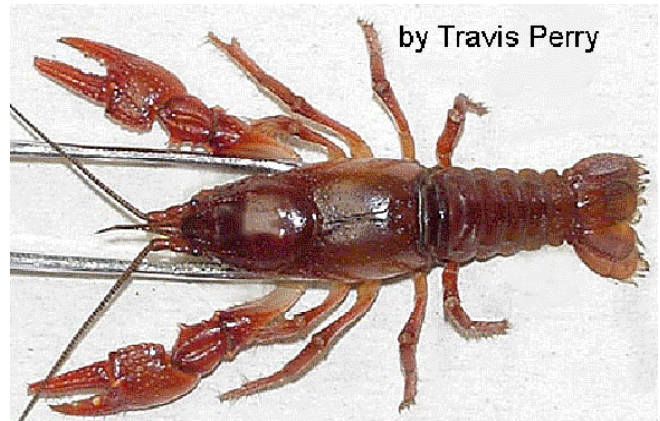
Cambarus carolinus

Contributor: Jennifer Price

DESCRIPTION

Taxonomy and Basic Description

The red burrowing crayfish has a cylindrical body shape and is brick reddish in color. The chelae have a large row of tubercles on the mesial surface of the palm (NCWRC 2005).

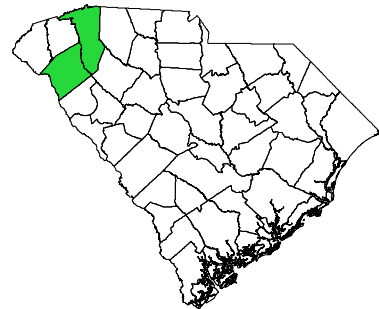


Status

NatureServe (2004) identifies the rank for the red burrowing crayfish as imperiled (S2) in North and South Carolina and apparently secure (S4) in Tennessee.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AND SIZE

The red burrowing crayfish is an obligate burrower found in the upper Broad River basin (Hobbs and Bouchard 1973). Its distribution in South Carolina is spotty and restricted to a few wetlands, seeps and bogs in the western piedmont in Anderson, Greenville and possibly Pickens Counties (A. Eversole, pers. comm.). This species is also found in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee (NatureServe 2004).



HABITAT AND NATURAL COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS

Although the red burrowing crayfish is a primary burrower, it is often found in surface waters including springs, seeps, and bogs (NCWRC 2005). Because it is more closely associated with surface water bodies than primary burrowers in the genus, *Distocambarus*, it appears that it may be dependent upon a high water table.

CHALLENGES

Very little is known about its natural history or population status. We suspect that any activities likely to alter the water table, such as major road construction or tapping into groundwater for dense suburban development would threaten this species.

CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There are no significant conservation accomplishments for the red burrowing crayfish at this time.

CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct research to determine the natural history and population status of the red burrowing crayfish.
- Determine the importance of alterations to the groundwater table to population stability of the red burrowing crayfish.
- Develop and conduct landowner and general education programs that stress the unique nature of terrestrial burrowing crayfish and their importance in South Carolina.

MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS

Collection of data that better describes the natural history and population status of the red burrowing crayfish may be considered a measure of success. Completion of groundwater investigations and determination of recommendations to protect red burrowing crayfish would also be considered a sign of success. Assessing participation in education programs would assist in measuring success of the programs.