

Date: 18 June 2025

Dear Sir or Madam,

Crayfish deaths in the River Arrow, between Kington and Pembridge, and increased biosecurity

The Environment Agency is investigating the deaths of our rare and legally protected native white clawed Crayfish on the River Arrow (Herefordshire) between Kington and Pembridge. We expect this to be confirmed as Crayfish Plague which is deadly and very infectious disease for white clawed crayfish. Crayfish plague is a species specific disease and is not harmful to humans or other animals.

We are contacting you to help us limit the risk of further deaths of this endangered species by taking simple biosecurity steps.

White clawed Crayfish look like miniature lobsters, they hide away under rocks and logs during the day, and emerge during the night to eat. They are our largest native, freshwater invertebrate but are now rare in Britain. The few remaining populations of white-clawed crayfish are very vulnerable to this disease and also face local extinction due to competition from non-native crayfish species and loss of habitat.

Once crayfish plague is present in a watercourse the white-clawed crayfish will usually all succumb to the disease. This may occur over several weeks as the fungus is spread by contact between individual white-clawed crayfish, through the water or contact with infected mud. The Crayfish Plague fungal spores can live without a crayfish host for 22 days in the water or on damp clothes or equipment. The disease can be transferred to White Clawed Crayfish in other parts of the catchment via water and mud on damp clothes, footwear, bike tyres, vehicle tyres, fishing or boating equipment or any machinery, or by dogs, horses or livestock.

We have asked our staff, contractors and the public to stay out of watercourses in these areas until further notice. Please help us to prevent the spread of this disease by asking your staff and contractors to also suspend activities in this watercourse.

If you are using equipment in any river, to stop the spread of the Plague, other infectious diseases or invasive species, please follow these steps:

Clean off any mud or vegetation and remove any standing water.
Either thoroughly dry the equipment, preferably in sunlight making sure all nooks and crannies are dry OR
Treat with a disinfectant capable of killing fungal spores.
Do not use damp equipment in another stream on the same day.

Additionally, we are advising everyone to take these steps:

1. Report any sighting of dead or distressed crayfish to the EA incident line.
2. Avoid entering the River Arrow, between Kington and Pembridge.
3. Check, clean dry, biosecurity measures should be taken when visiting any watercourse to avoid spreading invasive species and disease. Particularly through check, clean dry measures should be taken on any anything entering the water courses at the River Arrow, between Kington and Pembridge.



Check your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particular in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.



Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly. Remember mud can retain spores so needs to be removed completely. Use hot water where possible. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.



Dry all equipment and clothing - some species live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

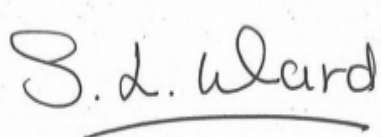
We would be grateful if you could circulate this email and advice to your networks and workforce immediately.

If you see dead Crayfish or an environmental incident please phone **0800 80 70 60**.

Please do not handle or remove live or dead Crayfish. It is illegal to do this without a license.

Thank you for your support.

Yours Sincerely



Suzanne Ward
Area Duty Manager