

Crayfish

Order: Decapoda Family: Astacidae

Number of species in North America: 280



CREEK CONNECTIONS,
Allegheny College

Size: 10-150mm

One pair of **antenna** much longer than other two pairs.

5 pairs of **walking legs**

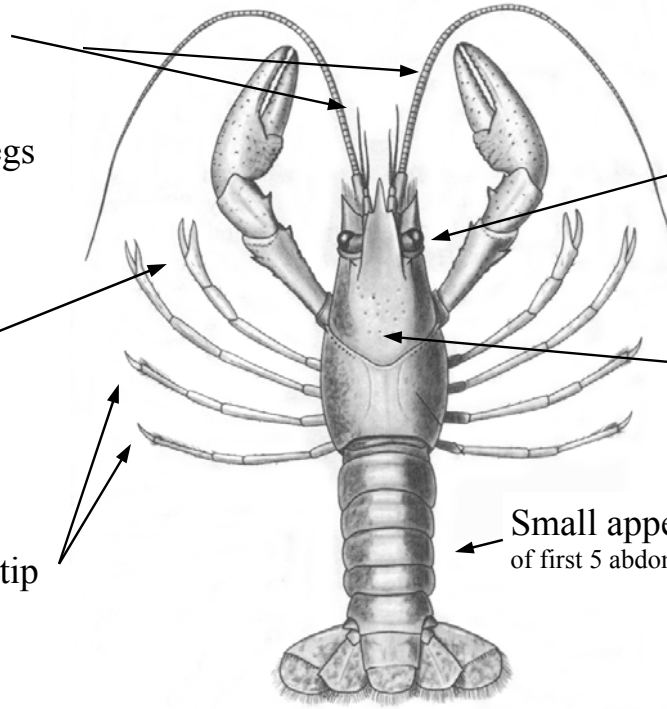
First 2-3 pairs of walking legs have **hinged claw**

Other legs have **pointed tip**

2 large, **compound eyes**

Cephalothorax (where head is fused with thorax)

Small appendages on bottom of first 5 abdominal segments



SIMILAR TO: fresh water prawn

- Crayfish are generally brownish-green, speckled and mottled, while prawns are light-grey or cream-colored, and usually translucent.
- Both can change color depending on surroundings.

Diet: Will consume whatever is available. Primary diet decaying vegetation; also feed on live snails, aquatic insects, scuds, small fish, and fish eggs.

Food for: Game fish, predaceous water insects.

Habitat: Shallow water of rivers, lakes, ponds, and swamps; hidden among rocks or debris.

Movement: Hide during day, crawl on legs at night. When disturbed, swim backward. Use tail for propulsion.

Breathing: Through gills— wave to circulate water into gill chambers.

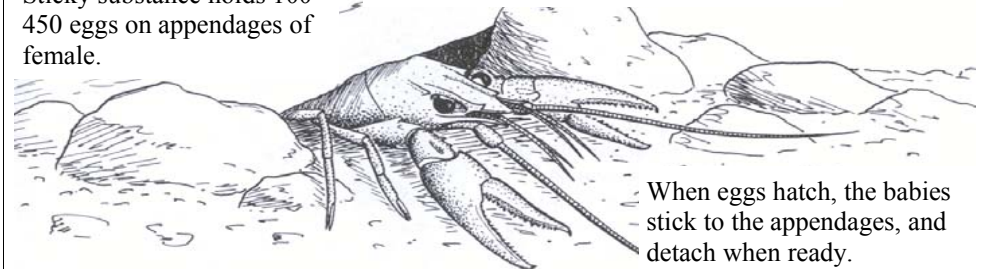
Water Quality Indicator: Group II— can exist under a wide range of water quality conditions; a large number indicates MODERATE water quality.

Credits: McCafferty, W. Patrick. *Aquatic Entomology*, 1981.

Life Cycle Corner

Incomplete Metamorphosis

Sticky substance holds 100-450 eggs on appendages of female.



When eggs hatch, the babies stick to the appendages, and detach when ready.