

# Not Wanted



**VIRILE CRAYFISH**

**Alias:** *ORconectes virilis*

**Native:** Upper Mississippi River, Hudson River, and Great Lakes drainages.

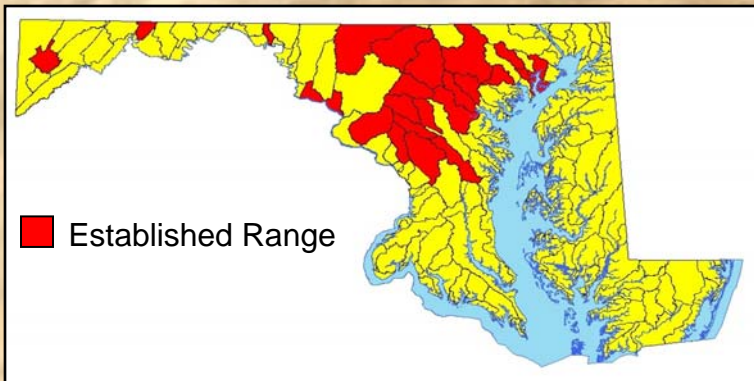
**Size:** Over five inches in length, not including claws.

**Description:** Virile crayfish varies in color from brown to reddish-brown with green hues. Typically, its large claws are greenish and contain cream or yellow tubercles. It inhabits small streams to large rivers and reservoirs, and is found in riffles or pools under large flat rocks or in leaf litter.

**Impacts to Aquatic Ecosystem:** Virile crayfish is extremely aggressive and much larger than its native counterparts in Maryland. It's hostile nature allows it to out-compete native crayfishes, such as spinycheek and Allegheny crayfish, for optimal habitat under rocks and crevices. This makes native crayfishes more vulnerable to competition and predation from other crayfishes, fishes, and other animals. Due to its tolerance of pollution and habitat alterations, stream degradation may hasten the spread of virile crayfish and lead to greater displacement of native crayfish in Maryland streams.

**Means of Introduction:** This crayfish was first introduced into the Patapsco River near Woodstock, Maryland as early as 1885. At that time, it was a popular food item in Baltimore food markets. More recently, release from bait buckets has hastened the spread of virile crayfish.

**Status in Maryland:** Virile crayfish is known to occur in the Patapsco, Bush, Susquehanna, Potomac, Gunpowder, and Patuxent Rivers, the Washington Metro area, and the Middle Potomac River basins. It is also established in Deep Creek Lake.



**Look-A-Likes:** Virile crayfish may be confused with many types of native crayfish; however, it can be distinguished by its large body, a chestnut-brown saddle across its back, and claws with yellow tubercles.

**Legal Standing:** Prohibited from import, transport, sale, purchase, and possession in Maryland. \*Special provisions for delivering specimens to authorities, visit [www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives).

For more information on invasive species in Maryland visit [www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives).

