

Guidance on Signal crayfish Trapping in England

On the 1st December 2019, the laws around the trapping and transfer of Signal crayfish in England changed. This will have an impact on fisheries and managers wishing to manage Signal crayfish at their water bodies.

The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 restricts activities around the keeping, release, transport and selling of live Signal crayfish unless in accordance with a licence.

These changes are intended to help to protect native species, improve Signal crayfish management and prevent the unintentional transfer of these species between waterways.

If you wish to manage Signal crayfish you need to consider:

Where is the water you want to trap located?

Anyone who wishes to trap Signal crayfish should check whether they are located within a 'containment' zone (formerly a 'go area'), mostly in Southern England or an 'exclusion' zone (formerly a 'no go' area) which mostly relates to Northern England. This will determine the activities you can undertake and the licences you can apply for. These zones are currently based on the same postcode system used for the Schedule to the Prohibition of Keeping of Fish (Crayfish) Order (1996). [The list of postcodes is available in the Annex of the Trapping authorisation.](#)

A trapping authorisation is required to trap Signal crayfish in both zones. All cases will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Trapping in exclusion zones will only allowed for conservation, scientific or fisheries management purposes which maintains the status quo prescribed by the Crayfish Order (1996).

Licences required

Trapping Signal crayfish

Licence required: Trapping Authorisation (EA)

Anyone wishing to trap Signal crayfish in England will require a [Crayfish Trapping Authorisation](#) from the Environment Agency. There are strict rules about the design and size of crayfish traps because they can harm other wildlife (e.g. water voles).

Important things to note under the trapping authorisation:

- You must **remove all** the Signal crayfish that are caught in the traps (i.e. no small crayfish are returned to the water)
- You must **kill all of animals at the site of capture** (unless under a management licence from Natural England – see below)
- You will also need the permission from the landowner and/or fishery owner to trap

Live transfer of Signal crayfish off site

Licence required: Management Licence (NE)

If you wish to transfer live animals away from the site of capture you will require a [Management Licence](#) from Natural England.

This licence allows activities aimed at eradicating, controlling or containing crayfish populations for conservation, scientific or fisheries management purposes.

Important things to note under the management licence:

- It is **not** possible to obtain a licence for personal consumption. You must not take live animals away from the riverbank. You can take animals that you have killed on the riverbank away for consumption at home.
- Animals that have been trapped for commercial reasons can only be taken live away from the site of capture to a **licenced processing facility**.
- It is now illegal to sell, use or exchange live Signal crayfish e.g. for human consumption.

Further information

Guidance: [Invasive non-native \(alien\) animal species: rules in England and Wales](#)