

RED SWAMP CRAYFISH ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS IN MICHIGAN

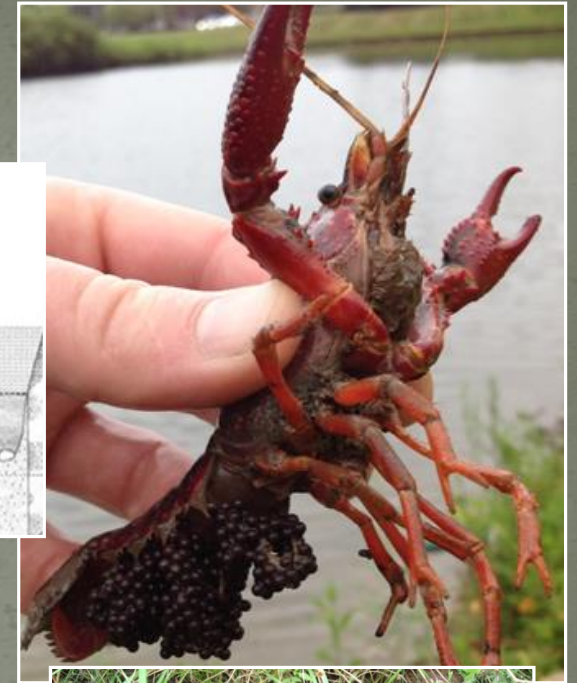
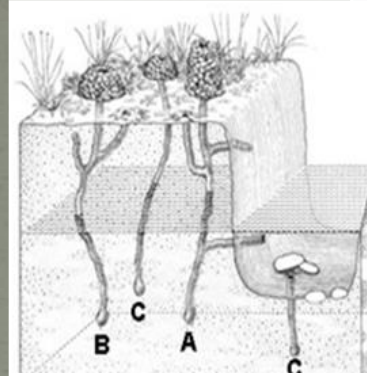


June 27, 2018
Corporal Nick Torsky
Lieutenant Mike Feagan



Red Swamp Crayfish Threat

- Most invasive crayfish worldwide
 - Outcompete native species
 - Dig complex burrows causing bank destabilization
 - Feed on vegetation and negatively impact water quality
 - Reproduce prolifically
 - Travel up to 3 km over land
 - Survive for extended periods out of water



Michigan Regulations

Public Act 451 of 1994, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act

2003: Part 413: Transgenic and Nonnative organisms (**prohibited species**)

2014: Invasive Species Order

- Authorized by Part 413
- Included red swamp crayfish
- PROHIBITS POSSESSION OF LIVE SPECIMENS
- Penalties vary from civil fine less than \$100 to felonies carrying up to 3 years in prison and fine of up to \$250,000

Fisheries Order 249 – Crayfish Regulations

2015: PROHIBITS USE OF NONNATIVE CRAYFISH AS BAIT, LIVE OR DEAD



Angler NOTICE!

Red Swamp Crayfish are a **prohibited** species.
It is **illegal** to use Red Swamp Crayfish for bait.

As of 2015, possession of live Red Swamp Crayfish is **ILLEGAL**. Fines can be as high as \$10,000.



This species causes negative impacts:

- Burrowing activity causes shoreline destruction.
- Outcompetes native species for available food and space.

For more information, visit michigan.gov/fishing



2015 - The work begins

Working with partners:

- Michigan State University, MDNR Fisheries Division

Identifying vectors:

- Classrooms, and subsequent disposal
- Pet and aquarium trade
- Live food markets
 - Grand Rapids, Lansing areas

LED plan of attack:

- Overt investigation
- Covert investigation
- Field officer awareness
- Blended operations
- Identify the suppliers



2015 Field Operations

June 17: 4 dead RSC located at Kollen Park,
Lake Macatawa, Ottawa County

- Bait vector identified as major concern
- Southern Lake Michigan freshwater drum
 - crayfish are preferred bait
 - ethnically diverse area

June 21: Field officer contact with multiple
fishermen at Lake Macatawa, possessing both
live and dead RSC

- live markets identified as source



2015 Field Operations - continued

June 22: Covert operations initiated

- Contacts at multiple live food markets, Grand Rapids area - out of stock
- Identified delivery schedule
- Determined seasonal availability due to loss during shipping

June 26: Covert buy, overt investigation

- warnings to multiple markets

July 18: Probationary officer (off-duty) recognized live RSC possessed by angler, Saugatuck Pier (seizure made)



2015 Wrap-Up

Further collaboration with Fisheries Division

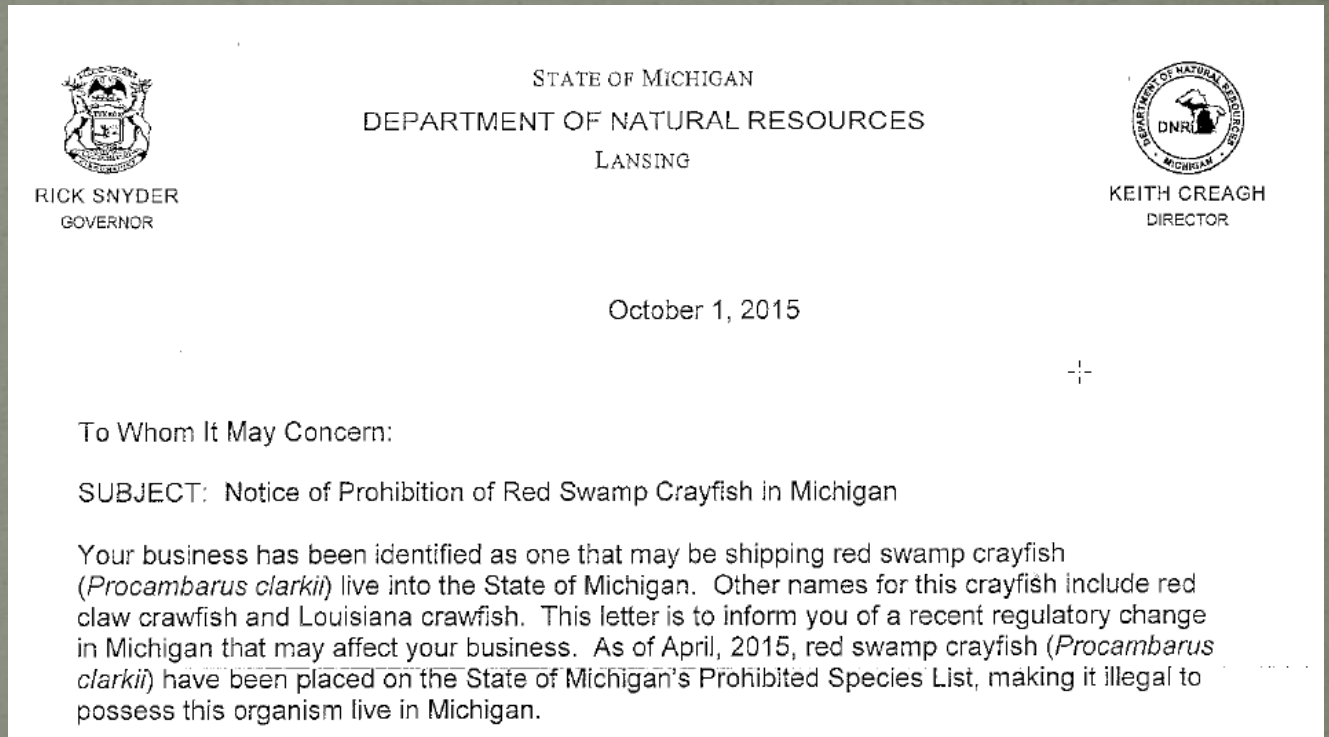
- Potential outlets identified
- Wholesalers identified
- Letters sent

Areas of focus for field officers

- Southwest Michigan
- Freshwater drum runs

Public Education

- Signage, press releases



2016 Field Operations

March 25: Grand Rapids area market warned during 2015 operations had
RESUMED CRAYFISH SALES!

April 7: Operation CRAWDAD

- Incorporated sister unit, Special Investigations Unit
- Seizure made at store
- Delivery truck stopped, driver interviewed, leading to Madison Heights store
- Texas wholesaler interviewed

(Claimed ignorance/not a letter recipient)

June 3: Additional RSC seizures in Madison Heights



2017 Field Operations

Education and enforcement efforts prove successful, but the damage has been done.

July 13: First discovery of live RSC in the wild

-Sunset Lake, Vicksburg

July 17: Sheraton Hotel retention pond

-Novi



2018 - Active Case

May 12: MSU employee enters live food market in Southeast Michigan

- Personal shopping trip
- Employed on RSC eradication team
- Located & photographed live RSC

May 13: MSU employee returned to store, purchased live specimens

- Being sold for both food and bait

May 16: LED notified & responded immediately - no product left!

May 18: After tip from USFWS agent, LED SIU detective purchased
27 pounds of live RSC

Box obtained during purchase marked 5 of 6



2018 - Active Case - continued

May 23: Inspections conducted on known and discovered Southeast Michigan markets

- No live specimens or AIS violations found
- Stores with prior AIS history inspected

May 24: Search warrant executed at suspect store

- Records obtained for 2017, 2018
- Wholesaler identified
- Additional stores identified
- Recipient of all 6 boxes



Prosecutions

2015: Warnings & education

2016: Oakland County PAO denied request

- Combined prosecutions through AG office
- Kent County Prosecution still possible

2018: Currently being reviewed by Washtenaw County
PAO

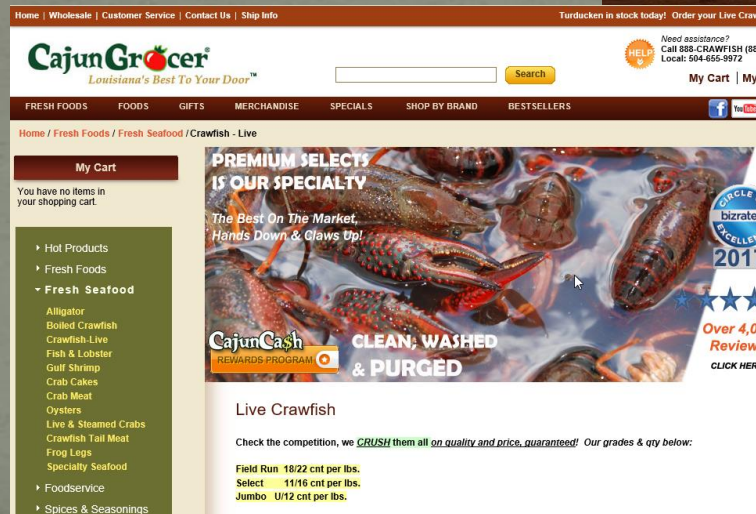


Challenges

Educating the public and retailers

Educating out-of-state wholesalers

Educating local courts and PAOs



COMPANY	Live Crawfish 40 lbs select	Overnight Shipping	Total Cost	Cost per Pound
Louisiana Crawfish Company	\$214.99	Included	\$214.99	\$5.37
Crawdads.net	\$285.00	Included	\$285.00	\$7.12
CajunGrocer.com	\$227.59	Included	\$227.59	\$5.68
CajunCrawfish.com	\$249.99	Included	\$249.99	\$6.24

WHY PAY MORE • \$14.00 - \$70.01 SAVINGS



Moving forward

Re-write of Part 413:

- In legislative infancy
- Would grant inspection authority and greater industry oversight

Seek prosecutions:

- Current and old cases
- Education of PAOs and courts

Continue inspection regimen:

2013: 270 bait, 40 markets

2016: 500 combined

2014: 30 markets

2017: 430 combined

2015: 98 bait, 167 AIS

- Difficult to track effectiveness due to ever-changing marketplace





Michigan DNR, Law Enforcement Division
Great Lakes Enforcement Unit

