

# Wisconsin Invasive Crayfish Enforcement

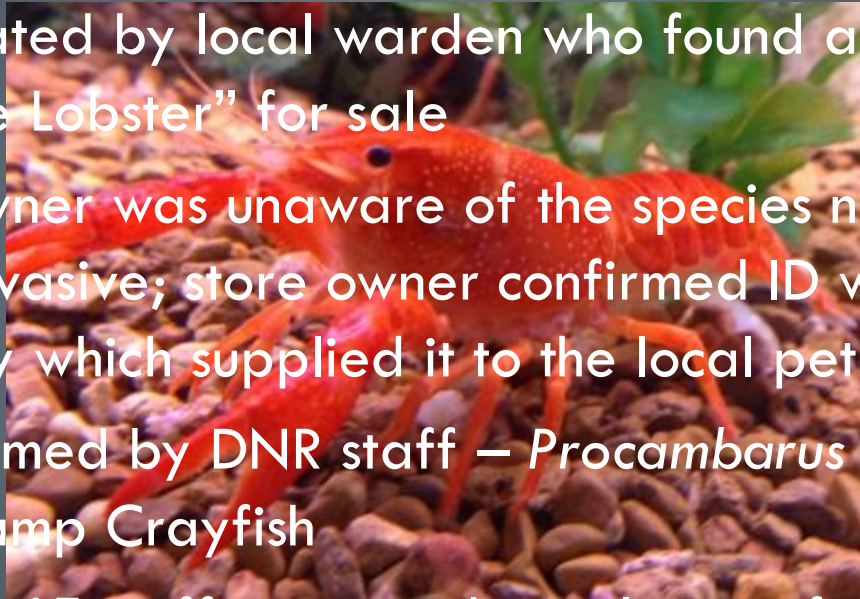


Lieutenant Robert Stroess  
Wisconsin DNR Conservation Warden



# Case Background

- January 2019 – Complaint to DNR Hotline about a Red Swamp Crayfish at a Milwaukee pet store
  - Investigated by local warden who found a single “Orange Lobster” for sale
  - Store owner was unaware of the species name or that it was invasive; store owner confirmed ID with the company which supplied it to the local pet store
  - ID confirmed by DNR staff – *Procambarus clarkii* a.k.a. Red Swamp Crayfish
  - DNR non-LE staff contacted supplier – after a few weeks they provided product list by species; numerous prohibited crayfish



# Wisconsin Laws

- Basically a crayfish white list in Wisconsin
  - Native species are OK – Only 6 species! But not really commercially traded
  - Non-native species are prohibited – *no sales, no transport, no possession, no anything*
    - Rusty crayfish limited exceptions due to being widespread
    - No other realistic exceptions



# Those 6 Native Species are . . .

**Virile Crayfish**



**Calico Crayfish**



**Northern Clearwater Crayfish**



**White River Crayfish**



**Prairie Crayfish**



**Devil Crayfish**



Case Background Continued

Communication . . .

Communication . . .

Communication



## Case Background Continued

- Visited Illinois-based pet wholesale supplier in March 2019
- Obtained records of sales to Wisconsin stores for March 2017 to March 2019
  - delivered 841 prohibited exotic crayfish
  - 23 retail store locations in Wisconsin











06

F3150

1/14/2019

Crayfish Electric Blue

316-~~2~~28

03

1/11 4

1-25

291

A03-F

3-20-15

## Case Background Continued

- The non-native crayfish species they delivered to Wisconsin included:
  - 7 common names vs. 8 scientific names
  - Lots of overlap
    - ELECTRIC BLUE
    - LG (“Large”)
    - MEXICANUS MINI
    - NEON RED
    - PAPUA BLACK SAPPHIRE
    - SMALL
    - WHITE

## Case Background Continued

### Lots of overlap

- ELECTRIC BLUE – *Procambarus alleni* and *Procambarus paeninsulanus*
- LG (“Large”) – *Astacoidea* sp.
- MEXICANUS MINI – *Procambarus mexicanus*
- NEON RED – ***Procambarus clarkii***
- PAPUA BLACK SAPPHIRE – ***Procambarus clarkii***
- SMALL – *Cambarus bartonii*
- WHITE – *Austropotamobius pallipes*, *Cherax quadricarintus*, and ***Procambarus clarkii***

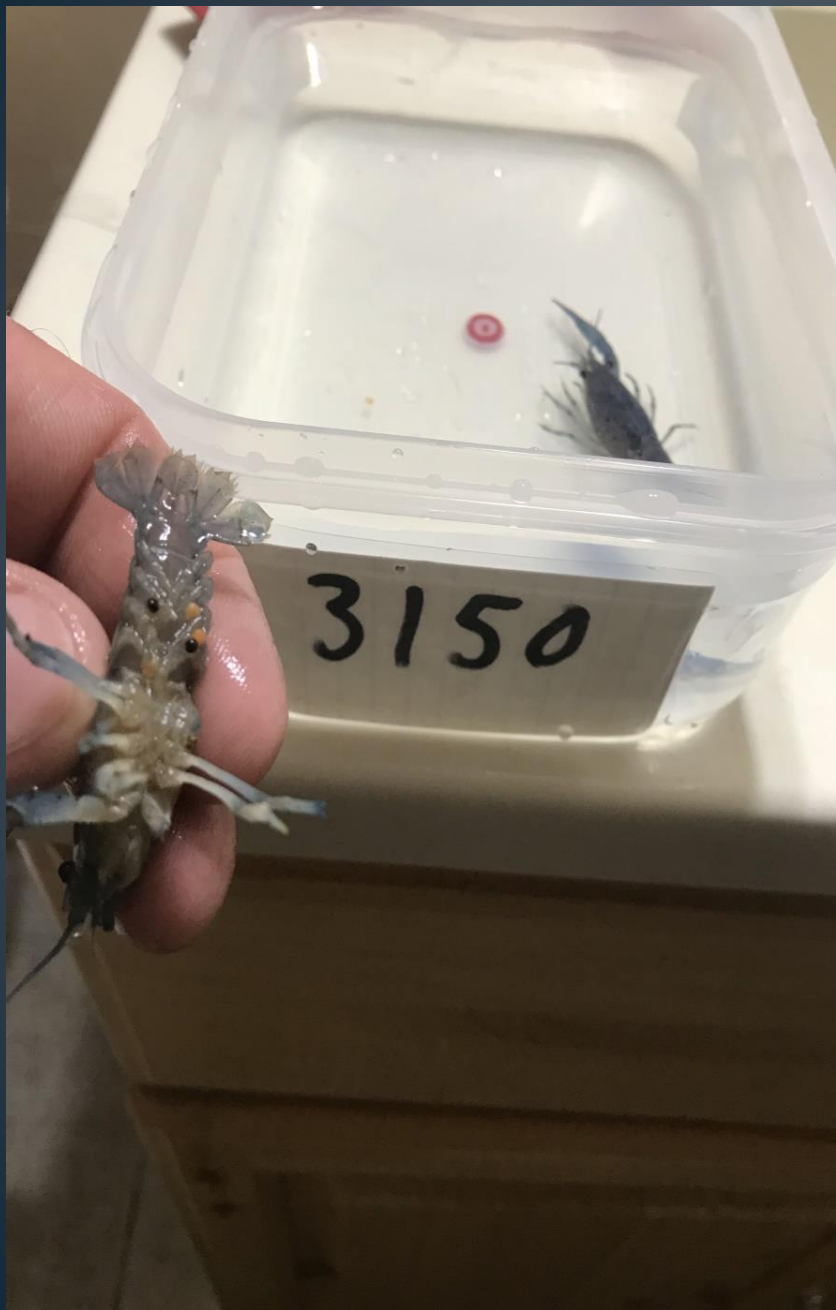
# Training and Education – Case Preparation

- LE and AIS program coordinated efforts
- Developed *Investigative Plan*. LE and AIS programs agreed to strategies, enforcement, and release response if needed
- Had a training day
- All crayfish pretty much look the same, right?













# Store Visits

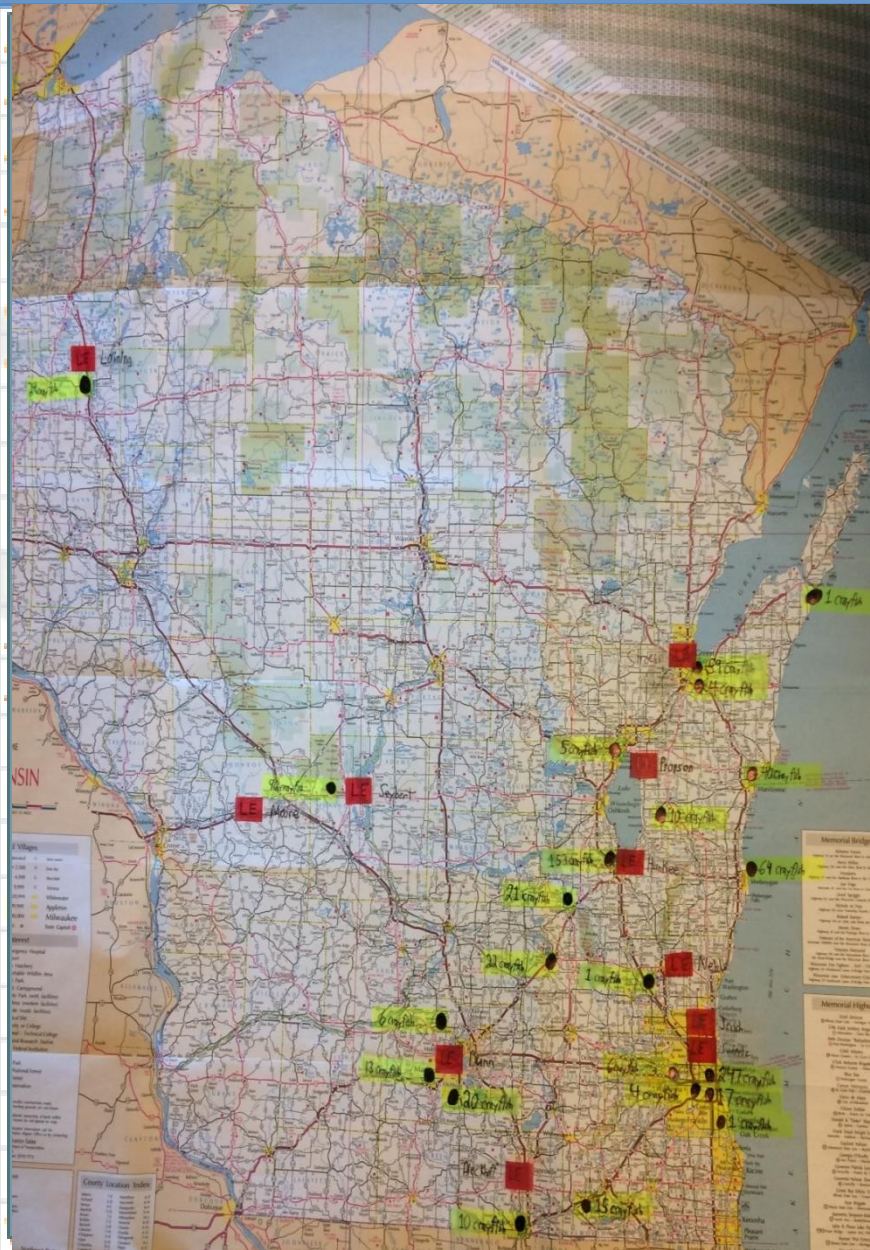
- Phase 1: Pairings of LE and non-LE staff visited 23 retail stores

- Seized about 15 prohibited crayfish still in store
- Stores told us about additional wholesale suppliers we previously did not know about; at least 76 additional crayfish

- Many crayfish died in store
- Many stores had no way to track sales
- Identified 35 specific retail customers who purchased approximately 135 crayfish (rewards cards/memory)
- Supplier continued to deliver to stores!!!!



		Customer		
Number Sold	Name	Address	City	
6			Brookfield	
22			Beaver Dam	
13			Madison	
6			Wauwaukee	
247			Milwaukee	
40			Manitowoc	
96			Necedah	
1			Sturgeon Bay	
10			Chilton	
1			Slinger	
4			Green Bay	
10			Beloit	
5			Appleton	
4			Milwaukee	
21			Waupun	
17			Milwaukee	
153			Fond du Lac	
15			Delavan	
24			Rice Lake	
59			Green Bay	
20			Fitchburg	
66			Sheboygan	
1			Oak Creek	



# Retail Customer Interviews

- Phase 2: LE staff interviewed about 33 retail customers who purchased prohibited crayfish
  - Confirmed MOST of the sales records
  - Seized some live crayfish
  - Established what happened to the crayfish
    - School aquariums
    - School dissection
    - Public display
    - Pets
  - Educated the customers about the conservation concerns related to red swamp crayfish

# Enforcement/Prosecution



# Hurdles Encountered

- Identification of native species vs. non-native species
- NO inspection authority for these retail stores
- No records/vague records
- Lack of cooperation from one store

# Esquire Estates July 2009















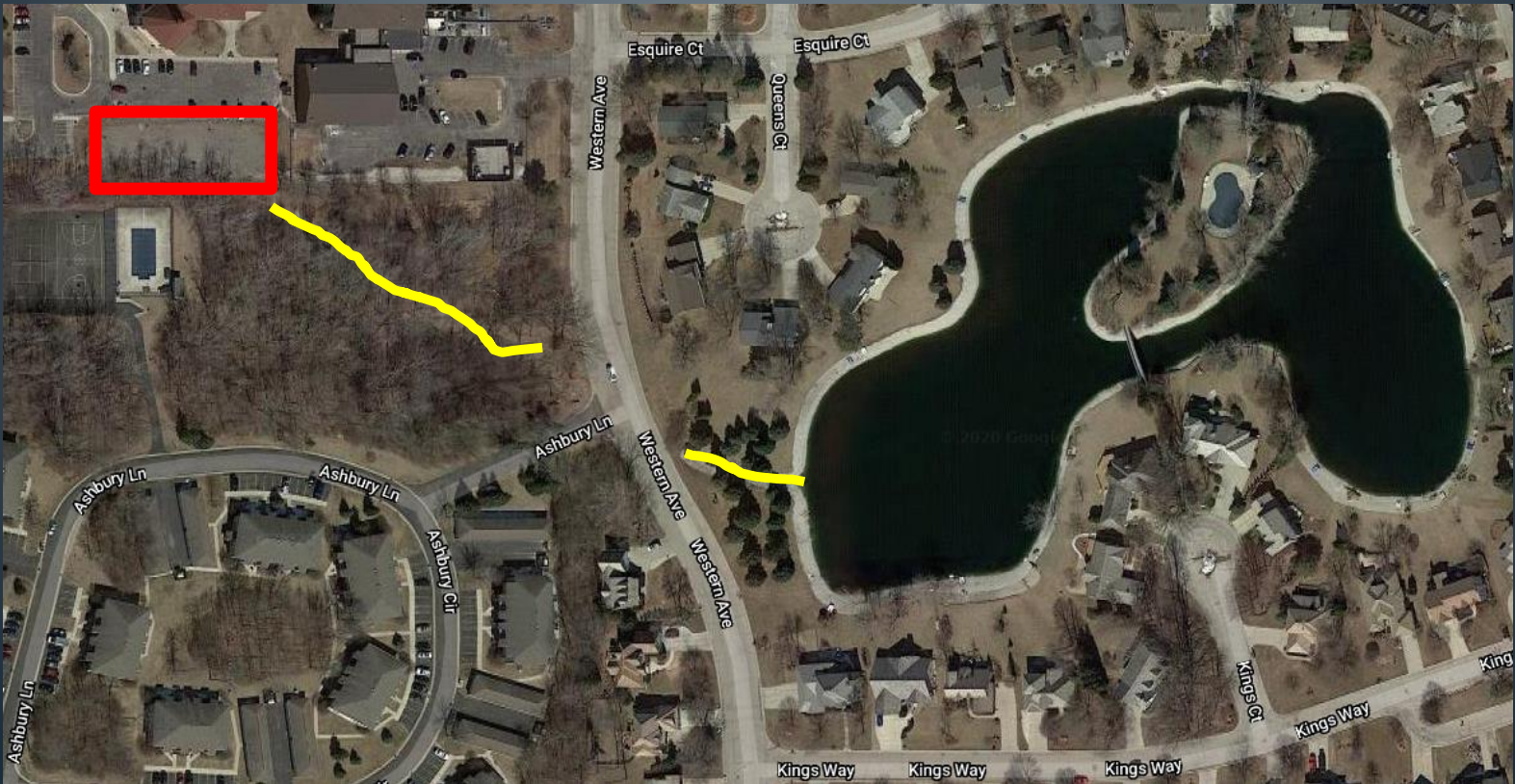








Here it is now . . .





# Great Lakes Fishery Commission – Law Enforcement Committee

- Coordinated educational outreach
- 39 red swamp crayfish suppliers
- Lots of inquiries, especially to States of Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.





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1854 TREATY AUTHORITY

CHIPPEWA-OTTAWA  
RESOURCE AUTHORITY  
FISHERIES AND OCEANS  
CANADA – CONSERVATION  
AND PROTECTION PRO-  
GRAM

GREAT LAKES INDIAN  
FISH AND WILDLIFE  
COMMISSION

ILLINOIS DNR

INDIANA DNR

MICHIGAN DNR

MINNESOTA DNR

NATIONAL OCEANIC  
AND ATMOSPHERIC  
ADMINISTRATION

NEW YORK DEC

OHIO DNR

ONTARIO MNRF

PENNSYLVANIA F&BC

UNITED STATES  
COAST GUARD

UNITED STATES FISH AND  
WILDLIFE SERVICE

WISCONSIN DNR



## Law Enforcement Committee

COORDINATING LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES OF THE GREAT LAKES JURISDICTIONS

December 18, 2019

Früge Aquafarms Inc.  
PO Box 393  
Branch, LA 70516

I am writing on behalf of the Great Lakes Law Enforcement Committee (Committee), a group of senior natural resource law enforcement officers that support improved coordination of law enforcement activities in support of Great Lakes fisheries. The Committee is comprised of natural resource enforcement agencies from the states of Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, the province of Ontario, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Coast Guard, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and three US tribal organizations around the Great Lakes. While the Great Lakes fall under many jurisdictions, the fishery resources do not observe political boundaries. A major recent focus of the Committee is identifying risks from aquatic invasive species that could impact Great Lakes fisheries.

We have identified live red swamp crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*) as being sold or advertised for sale by you or your company. Beyond being harmful to the environment, various activities involving live red swamp crayfish are illegal in jurisdictions within the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region. Red swamp crayfish burrow into the soil around dams, irrigation systems, and levees and cause severe and costly damage to these structures. Red swamp crayfish destroy nesting and nursery grounds of the fishery, compete with other fish species for food, and prey on the eggs of other aquatic life. As part of our work on this issue, we are advising those who advertise, sell, or ship live red swamp crayfish to any of the jurisdictions listed above to contact the appropriate regulatory authorities for information regarding invasive species. Any person or entity conducting business in these areas should familiarize themselves with and abide by all applicable regulations.

To assist you with operating legally and responsibly, the table on the next page provides contact information for the agencies responsible for protecting the Great Lakes region from invasive species. The Committee strongly encourages you to make immediate contact with the appropriate regulators to avoid the possibility of fines and penalties in the event you sell, ship, or otherwise trade in red swamp crayfish or other potentially invasive species.

Sincerely,

Robert Stroess  
Chair – Great Lakes Law Enforcement Committee