

Wandering Crayfish

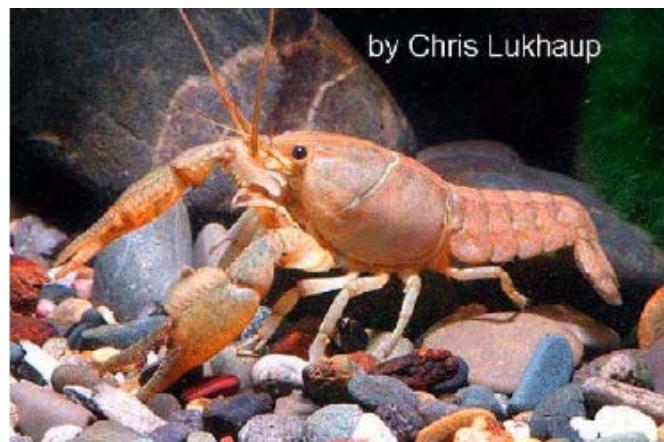
Procambarus barbatus

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DESCRIPTION

Taxonomy and Basic Description



Two color patterns have been observed for *Procambarus barbatus*. The “striped phase” has a dorsomedian longitudinal light stripe and a background color of light olive, olive-tan, pinkish-tan, or brown. The “speckled phase” has small irregular dark spots scattered over the carapace and dorsum of the abdomen and a background color similar to that of the striped phase. During the breeding season, males have a hairy tuft of setae on the mesial surface of the palm of the chelae (Hobbs 1981). Faxon (1890) examined several specimens that averaged 60 mm (2.4 in.) in length.

Status

NatureServe (2011) currently identifies the species with a ranking of apparently secure (S4) in South Carolina and secure (S5) in Georgia. The species was considered to be currently stable in Georgia and South Carolina (Taylor et al. 2007).



POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

P. barbatus is found in the Lower Coastal Plain from the lower Savannah River Basin in South Carolina to the Altamaha River basin in Georgia (Hobbs 1989). It has been collected in Hampton, Jasper, and Beaufort counties in South Carolina.

HABITAT AND NATURAL COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS

P. barbatus is found in a fairly restricted habitat type: seasonal ponds and ditches in flatwoods. It lives in these lentic waters and will burrow to reach the water table when water levels become low (Hobbs 1981).

CHALLENGES

P. barbatus is fairly common in its preferred habitat but is restricted to ponds in flatwoods, which may be a threatened habitat. The hydrology of these seasonal ponds must remain intact with seasonal saturation of the area with open ground surrounding the pond, not dense vegetation. Anything that alters the hydrology of the soil could adversely affect the habitat of this species. It is possible that an appropriate fire regime is important to maintaining suitable

habitat for this species. More research is needed to determine conclusively the soil and vegetation properties needed for this species' habitat and the effects of potential impacts. Based upon the restricted distribution and potential threats to its habitat, this species deserves some protection and should be considered a species of special concern.

CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There are no significant conservation accomplishments specifically for *P. barbatus* at this time.

CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct research to determine the necessary soil and vegetation properties of the habitat required by *P. barbatus*. Once these properties have been investigated, determine whether their habitat will be adversely impacted by activities in the vicinity of the habitat.
- Conduct additional surveys to determine the distribution and abundance of *P. barbatus*.
- Based on surveys, investigate the need to update the state ranking for *P. barbatus*.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Collection of data that better describes the habitat requirements for *P. barbatus* may be considered a measure of success.

LITERATURE CITED

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