



River Barle Signal Crayfish Project Factsheet

The River Barle Signal Crayfish Project is an innovative, volunteer-led trial attempting to control invasive crayfish on Exmoor.

The **signal crayfish** *Pacifastacus leniusculus* is one of the most damaging invasive species both in the UK and worldwide. It has decimated native crayfish populations and can cause severe adverse effects on river ecosystems. In 2014 signal crayfish were found along a 10km stretch of the river Barle, posing a threat to the river's biodiversity, salmon fishery, Water Framework Directive & SSSI status.



River Barle at our trial site

Invasive crayfish control is seen by many as futile, though most failed attempts have used biased catch methods for short lengths of time. Research has shown that control needs to target all life stages of crayfish and continue long term. We use two different types of traps plus sterilisation of dominant males to target adults, juveniles and reproductive success simultaneously.



Signal crayfish

Methods: We trap weekly from April – October with the help of up to 15 volunteers per session. Large male crayfish are sterilised manually and returned, whilst all other animals are humanely despatched on site. Tasks include emptying traps in river, processing crayfish and recording data. Success is measured by monitoring invertebrates, fish, juvenile and berried (egg-bearing) female crayfish. Project manager Nicky Green is doing PhD research on the project. Trapping started in 2015 and will continue till the end of 2018.

Help Wanted: Volunteers are at the heart of the project, and we would love more local people to get involved. We provide capital equipment, training and support to volunteers, allowing them to develop new skills, meet new people and spend time in the beautiful Exmoor countryside. We go out every Tuesday on our main site and also have a 'self managed' site where people can help out virtually any time to suit them. Alternatively join in on one of our intensive trapping weeks – the last two weeks of June, July, August & September

Interested? Call Patrick Watts-Mabbott on 01398 323665 / 07973727469 or visit <http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/get-involved>



Volunteers after a day on the river

The project is steered by a local partnership including Exmoor National Park Authority, Environment Agency, River Exe and Tributaries Association and the River Barle Fishing Club. It has received funding and in-kind support from the Exmoor National Park Partnership Fund, Natural England, Environment Agency, South West Water and CEFAS plus Heritage Lottery Funding through the Heart of Exmoor Scheme. The Fish Health Inspectorate licences the return of sterilised crayfish to the river.

Check out our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/barlecrayfish/>

