

## The trials and tribulations of *Austropotamobius pallipes* in Wales, UK

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**Abstract:** Populations of *Austropotamobius pallipes* in Wales, in the west of the United Kingdom, have historically occurred mainly in the upper catchments of the rivers Severn and Wye in mid-Wales. Long regarded as the only native crayfish in the Principality of Wales, literature searches shine doubt on the species “native” status within the Principality. There are references from the early nineteenth century recording the species being introduced to streams on the estates of wealthy landowners in mid Wales. Its locally disjunct distribution seems, in places, to coincide with the sites of ancient religious foundations such as abbeys. But, regardless of its origins, the species has been under severe stress from stream siltation from agriculture and forestry, now banned sheep dips, the spread of plague exacerbated by the introduction, initially into fish rearing facilities of *Pacifastacus leniusculus*, and most recently watercourse pollution from intensive chicken rearing units. Now found only in the very small watercourses of a few streams, its future would seem to lie in reintroductions into plague-free situations.

**Keywords:** *Austropotamobius*; Wales; native status; decline

**Oral presentation** (if possible)