

PLAY



Winter
2018

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CRAZY for CRAYFISH

Have you ever explored a creek or stream? If so, you've probably found a crayfish. Crayfish are fun to catch. They look like mini lobsters. Some people call them crawdads, crawfish or mudbugs. Crayfish are a type of **crustacean**.

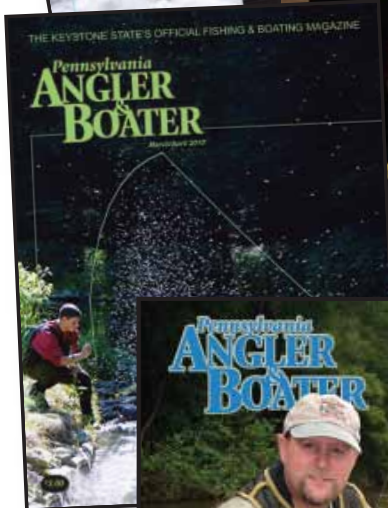
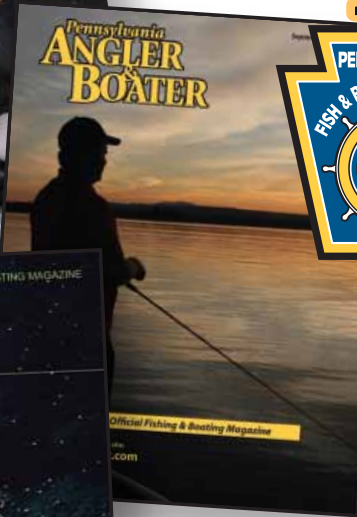
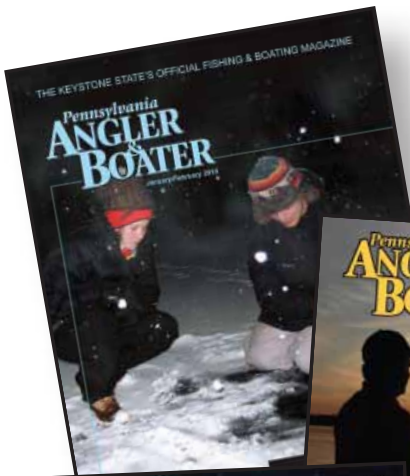
Do you know that there are 13 species of native crayfish living in Pennsylvania? Crayfish are usually earthy colors, such as brown or tan, but some are bright red, and some are blue. If you find an empty white crayfish body, you may think it's a dead crayfish. It is actually a shed **exoskeleton**. Crayfish exoskeletons don't grow with them. Instead, a new exoskeleton grows underneath the old one. Then, the crayfish crawls out of the old exoskeleton. Crayfish are very soft until their new exoskeleton hardens.



Some crayfish are bright blue.

VOGABULARY (Watch for these words!)

- **Crustacean** - An animal that has an exoskeleton, segmented body, jointed legs and lives in or near water
- **Ecosystem** - A community of living organisms and their environment
- **Exoskeleton** - A hard, outer covering that supports and protects an animals body in place of an internal skeleton
- **Invasive crayfish** - Crayfish not native to an ecosystem that causes harm



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