

Rusty Crayfish Case

The owner of a Colorado company must pay \$100,000 in fines and restitution for illegally transporting rusty crayfish into Wyoming, a felony Lacey Act violation. The company performs aquatic habitat work on private ranches. On a ranch south of Douglas, the company illegally imported freshwater crawfish and other crustaceans to the ponds on the ranch. Search warrants on the business obtained extensive hard copy records and 4 computers. Freshwater shrimp were also brought in with plant mediums for cover and feed. What else tags along with the plants to infect Wyoming waters is still unknown.

Rusty crayfish are identified as an injurious species in Wyoming and can cause a variety of negative environmental and economic impacts when introduced to new waters. They are an aggressive species that often displace native or existing crayfish species and destroy aquatic plant beds.

The restitution will pay for expenses incurred to eradicate the illegal crayfish. To date, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has spent \$34,424.81 to remove the crayfish from several ponds and a portion of one stream. Additional expenses will be incurred for monitoring the site and any subsequent eradication efforts.

