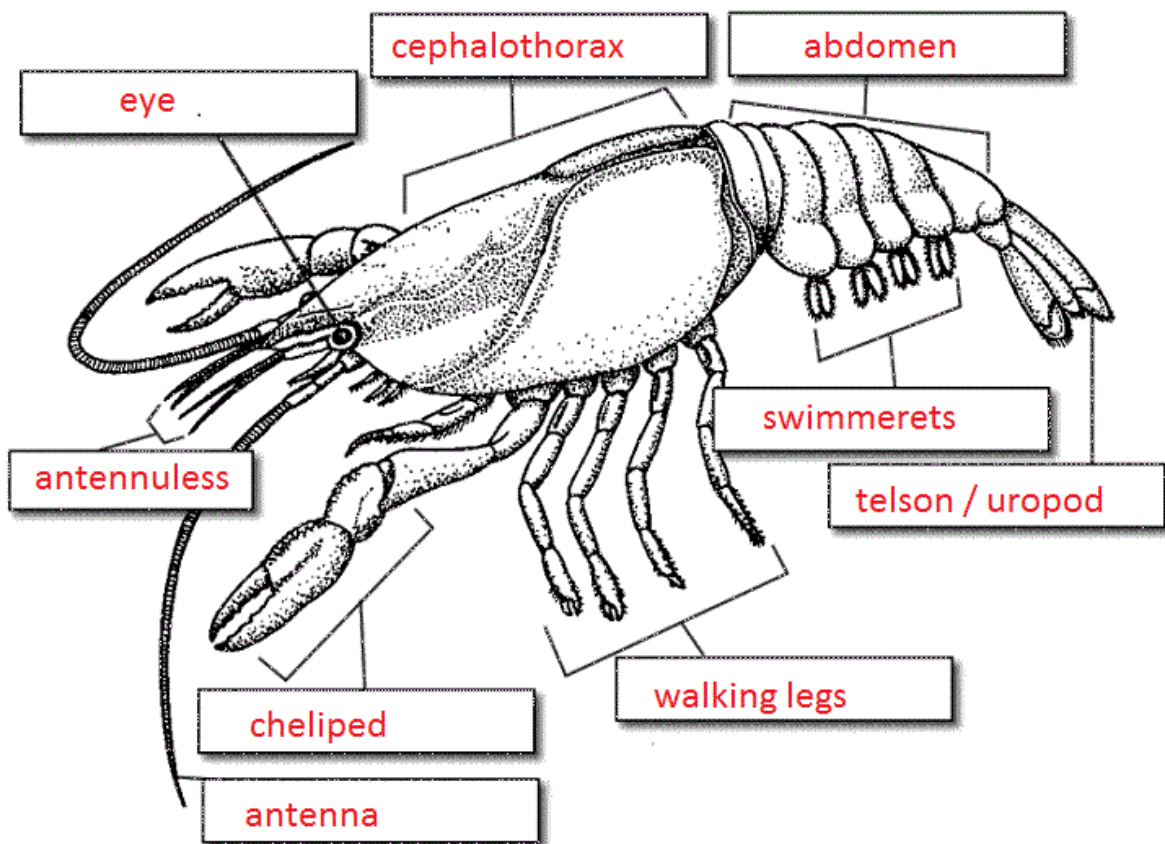


# Crayfish Facts

- Crayfish have many different names, including crawdad, crawfish, freshwater lobster, and even mudbugs.
- Crayfish mostly live in fresh water and are closely related to lobsters that live in the saltwater ocean.
- Crayfish can expect to live only about two years.
- Crayfish use their front claws, called *chelipeds* (pronounced *key-la-peds*), for walking AND for pinching. They also use their claws to cut things, catch food, and to attack and protect themselves.
- Crayfish don't have lungs. Instead they breathe through tiny feather-like gills that can pull oxygen out of the water, like fish do.
- Crayfish have a hard outside body that protects them like armor, called an *exoskeleton*. Their exoskeleton does not grow as the crayfish get bigger, so they have to shed it and wait while the next size grows in.
- Crayfish like to live under rocks in creeks and streams. They eat bugs, worms, tadpoles, and snails – but their favorite meal is dead, rotting fish.
- Crayfish walk slowly and carefully on the stream bed floor. But if you surprise them, they will swim away fast – backwards!
- A female crayfish can lay 10-800 eggs a year. Female crayfish carry the eggs with their tiny swimmerets. Depending how warm the water is, it can take anywhere from 2 weeks to 20 weeks for the eggs to hatch. Baby crayfish stay with their mother after they hatch.
- Alligators, turtles, some fish, and a few types of birds like to eat crayfish. They are called *predators*. Some people like to eat crayfish as a special treat. Others like to catch it to use for bait for fishing.



Sources:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crayfish>

<http://mackers.com/crayfish/info.htm>

[http://biologycorner.com/resources/crayfish\\_external\\_labelme\\_KEY.gif](http://biologycorner.com/resources/crayfish_external_labelme_KEY.gif) (picture)

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