Kisatchie Painted Crayfish
Faxonius maletae

Description
The Kisatchie painted crayfish (Faxonius maletae) is an elusive, freshwater crayfish endemic to the streams of northeast Texas and Louisiana. It is characterized by an olive carapace (hard, upper shell) and the red marks on the chelae (claws), legs, and above the eyes. Crayfish, in general, are keystone species that may indicate the health of a watershed, and nearly half of crayfish species are vulnerable, threatened, or endangered. The size of Kisatchie painted crayfish appears to be influenced by water depth. Individuals found in deep water have been documented to reach lengths of 101.6 mm, while those found in shallow water rarely reach lengths over 50.8 mm.

Life History
The Kisatchie painted crayfish is reproductively active in September and October; unlike other crayfish that reproduce in the spring. Males undergo a transition between two forms dependent upon reproductive behavior. Males are in the reproductive form during the fall and winter and molt into the non-reproductive form until the next fall. Eggs hatch in May, after being fertilized externally. The males have an estimated life expectancy of about 2 years.

Distribution
The Kisatchie painted crayfish has few historical records and is believed to be restricted to the Kisatchie Bayou and Bayou Teche watersheds in Louisiana and the Cypress Creek watershed in Texas. Historical collecting locations were obtained from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and recent field surveys determined that the Kisatchie painted crayfish was absent from 60% of its historical range in Texas.

Habitat
Little is known about the habitat requirements of the Kisatchie painted crayfish. They were historically collected in freshwater streams with sand, gravel, mud, or silt in northeast Texas and Louisiana. However, the Texas habitat was more stagnant and muddy than Louisiana. Kisatchie painted crayfish may prefer streams with varying water depth, heavy leaf litter, and cobble-lined stream bottoms. Food items include plants and carrion.

Conservation
Threats such as limited range, invasive crayfish species, and habitat loss impact the Kisatchie painted crayfish. It is listed as a species of special concern by the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program. It was also included in a 2010 petition for listing of 404 species under the Endangered Species Act, and is now under review.

For Further Information:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
2005 NE Green Oaks Blvd., Suite 140
Arlington, Texas 76006
February 2021
Kisatchie Painted Crayfish Range
Parishes in Louisiana include Natchitoches and Rapides. Counties in Texas include Franklin, Titus, Camp, Upshur, Marion, Harrison, Cass and Gregg. Created with www.mapchart.net

References

http://hdl.handle.net/10950/1317


Williams, L.R., M.G. Williams, J. Banta, J. Hernandez, L. Brown, and J. Placyk. 2014. Ecological niche modeling and field surveys for the Kisatchie painted crayfish, Orconectes maletae. USFWS SWG Contract 447170.