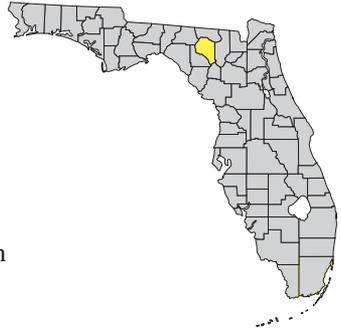


SANTA FE CAVE CRAYFISH

Procambarus erythropus



Order:	Decapoda
Family:	Cambaridae
FNAI Ranks:	G1/S1
U.S. Status:	None
FL Status:	Species of Special Concern



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Description: A medium-sized (body length to 3.5 in. = 90 mm), white crayfish with reduced eyes, each of which bears a reddish pigment spot. Specific identification is based on ornamentation of the first pair of small appendages under the tail (pleopods) of reproductive (form I) males.

Similar Species: A second cave crayfish, *Troglocambarus maclanei*, co-occurs in at least one site with *Procambarus erythropus*, but the former is much smaller (only 1.3 in. = 35mm) and bears very slender legs, extremely long antennae, and unpigmented, reduced eyes.

Habitat: Limited to groundwater of a few caves and sinkholes.

Seasonal Occurrence: Crayfish, including reproductive males, are present at sites year-round. Egg-bearing females have not been collected.

Florida Distribution: Known from several sites in southern Suwannee County, but only two (Sims and Azure Blue sinks) contain significant populations.

Range-wide Distribution: Same as Florida distribution.

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Conservation Status: One of the two most important sites is owned by The Nature Conservancy and managed specifically for this crayfish, but the security of this site is in extreme jeopardy from a cement company's plan to mine immediately adjacent land. The safety of this and other crayfish populations could be easily compromised by disruption of the water table from mining or by groundwater pollution from pesticide or herbicide use in surrounding areas. Garbage dumping in the early 1970s may have extirpated the species from at least one site. Conservation status at other sites is in need of documentation.

Protection and Management: Protect land around Azure Blue Sink, and increase protected land base around Sims Sink (imperative to prevent mining). Monitor crayfish populations and groundwater quality at both sinks.

Selected References: Deyrup and Franz (eds.) 1994, Hobbs 1942, Relyea and Sutton 1975.