

Yorkshire Crayfish Strategy 2026-2030

ASSESS

Aim 1: Establish distribution status of white-clawed crayfish (WCC), invasive species and diseases that threaten WCC populations, monitor and keep up to date.

Objective

Actions to achieve this:

1.1 Analyse existing WCC and invasive crayfish data (and mitten crab) to identify priority survey locations.

1.2 Undertake WCC surveys in areas with historic records, new records or data gaps and in areas of suitable habitat.

1.3 Undertake monitoring of sustainable WCC populations and ark sites at least every 5 years.

Obj 1: We will produce distribution maps of crayfish species and diseases that threaten WCC populations annually.

1.4 Monitor spread of alien crayfish populations in Yorkshire, prioritising survey sites closest to WCC populations.

1.5 Keep up-to-date with new and emerging crayfish survey methods. Appraise and implement where appropriate.

1.6 Partners to share data on WCC, and invasive species and diseases that threaten WCC populations in forum, to get an overall picture of status of crayfish in Yorkshire.

1.7 Produce distribution maps of native and invasive crayfish populations and incidents of diseases that threaten WCC populations. Share with forum members by March the following year and update Storymap.

PLAN

Aim 2: Work collaboratively to prioritise actions, increase efficiency and effectiveness and to maximise resources and impact.

Objective

Actions to achieve this:

2.1 Hold an Annual Crayfish Forum group meeting to maintain communication, identify opportunities to collaborate, and share knowledge. Host in-person event at least every 3 years.

2.2 Hold steering group meetings 4 times a year

2.3 Forum members to facilitate knowledge sharing, experience and sharing of opportunities.

Obj 2. We will implement the (2025-30) Crayfish Strategy and Delivery Plan over the next 5 years, review and update as required (minimum every 2 years).

2.4 Deliver targeted survey training to increase licence holders in forum to achieve Aim 1 of the Strategy.

2.5 Continued employment of FTE Crayfish Officer to coordinate delivery of YCF delivery plan and fundraise for identified projects that need development.

2.6 Encourage/influence all applicable agencies to incorporate the adopted Yorkshire crayfish strategy and delivery plan in their own strategic, fundraising and management frameworks as soon as revision allows.

2.7 Set up working groups where the opportunity to collaborate has been identified.

2.8 Work with academics to develop research projects relevant to YCF aims and objectives.

ACTION	
Aim 3: Stop further spread of invasive alien crayfish and crayfish plague, through improved biosecurity measures and other interventions where effective and practical, to minimise future losses of white-clawed crayfish.	
Objective	Actions to achieve this:
Obj 3. We will protect and defend existing strongholds, particularly those where threats have been identified, to establish and maintain white-clawed crayfish populations by 2030.	3.1 Keep up-to-date on research for WCC, including possible measures in the control of invasive species and diseases that threaten WCC populations
	3.2. Explore opportunities to designate sites with sustainable WCC populations to give additional protection, e.g.
	3.3 Identify physical in-channel barriers that are preventing the upstream movement of alien crayfish and liaise
	3.4 Implement improved site-specific biosecurity measures where necessary
Aim 4: Ensure that ark sites, waterbodies and catchments with white-clawed crayfish populations are thriving and biosecure.	
Objective	Actions to achieve this:
Obj 4. We will ensure conditions are maintained and enhanced for all sustainable white-clawed crayfish populations by March 2030.	4.1 Produce list of priority crayfish populations at sites requiring improvements to habitat or biosecurity over the next 5 years.
	4.2 Undertake habitat assessments/ walkover surveys of waterbodies where WCC are present to identify potential improvement works.
	4.3 Carry out riparian habitat improvement where identified on watercourses where WCC are present.
	4.4 Liaise with key stakeholders in areas where land management practices are having a negative effect on WCC populations.
Obj 5. We will establish a network of ark sites across Yorkshire by 2030.	4.5 Sustain captive breeding hatchery for WCC for ark site release and river supplementation. Explore options for
	4.6 Identify suitable traditional and 'in-situ' ark sites in each catchment with confirmed WCC populations, prioritising catchments where WCC populations are at-risk (e.g. proximity of signal crayfish, biosecurity, drought)
	4.7 Translocate populations of WCC threatened by invasive species and diseases to ark site within same
	4.8 Re-establish populations lost to crayfish plague from ark site or hatchery, where sites are at low risk of crayfish plague re-entering the watercourse.
	4.9 Report on % of sites in ark database in positive condition (recruiting, no plague, no alien crayfish) on an annual basis, with detailed surveys at least every 5 years.
	4.10 Produce case studies of successful ark sites and reasons for failure to better inform future work.

ENGAGEMENT: education and awareness-raising

Aim 5: Ensure that recreational river users and workers are aware of and follow biosecurity/ Check Clean Dry procedures through the delivery of a Yorkshire-wide biosecurity campaign

Objective	Actions to achieve this:
Obj 6: We will deliver a Yorkshire-wide biosecurity campaign linking in with existing invasive non-native species (INNS) biosecurity projects and campaigns: focusing on priority areas in 2025, rolling out widely in 2026-30	5.1 Undertake crayfish and biosecurity awareness training days for recreational groups, workers and any other
	5.2 Disseminate educational materials to recreational groups to reach wider audience.
	5.3 Attend face-to-face events (e.g. Yorkshire Show) to engage with recreational users and members of the public.
	5.4 Work collaboratively with other groups including the Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum to disseminate
	5.5 Engage with established recreational organisations to promote/ instil biosecurity internally.

Aim 6: Promote the importance of white-clawed crayfish and intact river ecosystems through the development and delivery of communication and education strategies.

Objective	Actions to achieve this:
Obj 7. We will implement the communication plan, to include engagement with potential funders/streams, for 2025-26, which will be updated annually	6.1 Review the forum's Communications Strategy, outlining the most effective ways to target stakeholder groups and achieve the forum's aims.
	6.2 Implement Communications strategy
Obj 8: We will produce and implement an education plan, broken down by audience, for 2025-26, which will be updated annually.	6.3 Review the forum's Engagement strategy, outlining the most effective methods of engagement for target groups.
	6.4 Implement Engagement plan

NETWORKING AND INFLUENCING

Aim 7: Develop a central hub where ideas, resources and expertise are shared and used, and through which we influence regional and national decision-making.

Objective

Obj 9: We will create a web-based hub to share up-to-date resources

Actions to achieve this:

7.1 Review and regularly update online hub (YCF storymap) on existing partner website to enable resource sharing and dissemination of information to partners, stakeholders and members of the public.

7.2 Create central area (sharepoint) to enable forum members to share information internally

Obj 10: We will participate in local, regional and national policy and programme development over the next 5 years to ensure that white-clawed crayfish are safeguarded and crayfish projects incorporated and resourced.

7.3 Ensure at least one partner attends each UK Crayfish Steering group meeting to feed into national planning and feed back to YCF.

7.4 Liaise with other active crayfish groups, particularly those neighbouring Yorkshire.

7.5 Encourage/influence all applicable agencies to reference the adopted Yorkshire Crayfish Strategy and Delivery plan in their responses to consultations.

YCF Communications strategy and plan 2026-30

Aim - Inform key stakeholders about WCC conservation and the Yorkshire Crayfish forum	
Objective	Actions to achieve this:
1. Promote and advertise opportunities to share knowledge and work collaboratively	1.1 Members of the forum to share and contribute to opportunities to share work externally
2. Raise Awareness of the importance of biosecurity and WCC conservation measures	2.1. Raise awareness of biosecurity measures
	2.2 Raise awareness of crayfish conservation
3. Provide access to information and resources on WCC	3.1. Promote information and resources on WCC conservation actions
4. Share key achievements of the forum to empower and inspire stakeholders to take action for WCC conservation	4.1 Use appropriate channels to promote the work of the forum and advertise opportunities for stakeholders to get involved

YCF Engagement strategy and plan 2026-30

Aim - Provide opportunities for key stakeholders to engage and participate in the Yorkshire Crayfish forum's activities	
Objective	Actions to achieve this:
1. Collaborate with stakeholders to increase impact and effectiveness of the forum	1.1 Identify opportunities to collaborate with relevant stakeholders
2. Provide stakeholders the opportunity to input into the forum's activities	2.1 Offer and promote opportunities for stakeholders to feed-into crayfish conservation work
3. Increase visibility of WCC and establish it as a flagship endangered species in England	3.1 Increase awareness of WCC
4. Provide stakeholders opportunities to engage with the forum and WCC conservation	4. 1 Deliver sessions with local communities
	4.2 Create resources for school-aged groups to engage with WCC and their conservation.
5. Empower stakeholders to take positive action for WCC conservation	5.1 Run training on biosecurity measures for crayfish