Slenderclaw Crayfish

IDENTIFICATION: The slenderclaw crayfish (*Cambarus cracens*) is one of almost 100 species of crayfish occupying Alabama's waterways. It is a relatively small, freshwater crustacean with a carapace (top shell) length of 1.0"-1.5" and a comparatively elongate, slender front claw.
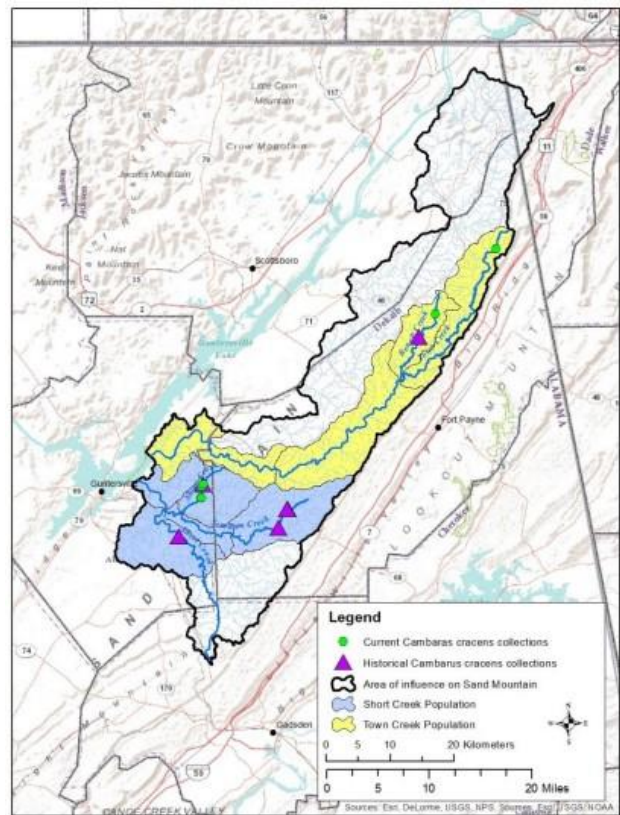
Two color forms have been documented: 1) a mostly uniform olive green to rusty brown; and 2) a distinct mottled pattern with a light gray to straw colored carapace overlain with speckling of rusty red to dark brown.

Slenderclaw crayfish. Photo © Guenter A. Schuster, Eastern Kentucky University

DISTRIBUTION: This endemic species is limited to streams in two adjacent Alabama watersheds that flow into the Tennessee River – Town Creek and Short Creek. Preferred habitat includes streams typically less than 20' wide with depths up to 2.3'.

ESA LISTING INFORMATION: The slenderclaw crayfish was listed as an endangered species and critical habitat designated on October 15, 2021. The presence of non-native virile crayfish (*Faxonius virilis*) and impacts from agriculture and climate change were identified as potential stressors to slenderclaw crayfish populations. Additional information regarding the listing status is [available here](#).

FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS: Compliance with Alabama's Best Management Practices for Forestry is critical when conducting forestry operations (harvesting and hauling) within the range of the slenderclaw crayfish.

Slenderclaw crayfish populations based on watershed boundaries and tributaries flowing into Guntersville Lake on the Tennessee River. The Short Creek population is highlighted in blue; the Town Creek population is highlighted in yellow. Purple triangles are historical collections, and green circles are current collections. Map obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service "Species Status Assessment for the Slenderclaw Crayfish (*Cambarus cracens*)".

This information is provided by the Alabama Forestry Commission
For more information, please visit:
www.forestry.alabama.gov