# Deadly Crayfish Plague Strikes River Irfon in Wales



**Deadly Crayfish Plague Reported in River Irfon, Wales**

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has issued a warning to the public to avoid entering the River Irfon near Builth Wells following the discovery of several dead crayfish. The deaths, first reported on the evening of June 28, 2024, are suspected to be caused by crayfish plague, a highly infectious disease fatal to crayfish but harmless to humans and other wildlife.

NRW officers have examined a three-mile stretch of the river and sent samples for testing, with results expected in the week commencing July 8, 2024. The disease is believed to be spread by invasive non-native crayfish, such as the signal crayfish. NRW is taking precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease, which can occur through minimal contact.

Jenny Phillips, the South Powys environment team leader for NRW, emphasized the critical importance of protecting the endangered white-clawed crayfish, which has seen a 50-80% population decline in recent years. The River Wye, including the River Irfon, is a designated Special Area of Conservation due to its essential habitat for the native crayfish.

Phillips urged the public to stay out of the river to safeguard these valuable creatures and maintain the health of the Wye catchment ecosystem. The crayfish serve as indicators of healthy, clean rivers and are vital to the ecosystem's balance.