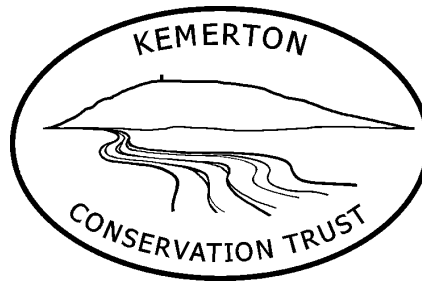


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19th November 2010

Partnering Buglife in a British Crayfish Project – Final Report

The White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) is our only native crayfish. Once a widespread and common species it has suffered severe declines with many local populations lost and the remainder at great risk. A non-native species, the American Signal Crayfish (*Pasifastacus leniusculus*) has spread a ‘crayfish plague’, whilst habitat degradation and pollution have contributed to the decline.

Buglife, the national invertebrate conservation charity, has been seeking ‘Ark Sites’ where new populations can be established, safe from these and other threats. Kemerton Conservation Trust (KCT) leases and manages for wildlife a former aggregate quarry, developed since worked ceased there in 1997 as a Nature Reserve. KCT approached Buglife to propose the reserve as an Ark Site.

A series of strict tests and checks were begun and meanwhile KCT asked Naturesave for funding for its role in partnering Buglife in the project. A grant from The Naturesave Trust helped us to purchase some of the materials and equipment. The reserve was approved as an Ark Site and KCT accepted as a suitable partner.

Experts suggested that the existing habitats be augmented for crayfish by the introduction of faggots of brushwood and an area of stone. A total of 88 faggots were made and positioned by boat and 75 tonnes of stone dropped into place using a long-reach machine working from the bank.

A suitable source site for the collection of the British White-clawed Crayfish was found and arrangements made to trap and transport them. At the time of writing a provisional date has been made for the translocation to take place. Once in place, the new population will be regular monitored to check its health and efficacy.

KCT and Buglife are extremely grateful to Naturesave for helping with this important project. If successful it will contribute greatly to the future survival of the British White-clawed Crayfish.

John Clarke
Conservation advisor