

American Lobster

Scan for more information



Species Description

Scientific name: *Homarus americanus*

AKA: New England lobster

Native to: North Eastern America

Habitat: Most likely shallow coastal waters among boulders, but other habitats and deep water

Easily confused with the native European Lobster. Expert identification may be required, so retain any suspicious specimens (and take photographs of key features).

Homarus americanus poses a serious risk in Northern Ireland and Europe as it could have significant detrimental impacts on the native lobster through competition, inter-breeding and by spreading disease.

Homarus americanus is not established in Northern Ireland waters but reproduction is believed to be possible. Specimens in the wild are probably as a result of deliberate releases or escapes from captivity.

If you do catch a suspected American lobster, retain it. **Do not return it to the water.** Submit your report to CEDaR online recording <http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>. If possible, please include photos of key identification features. DAERA staff will verify your record and provide further advice.

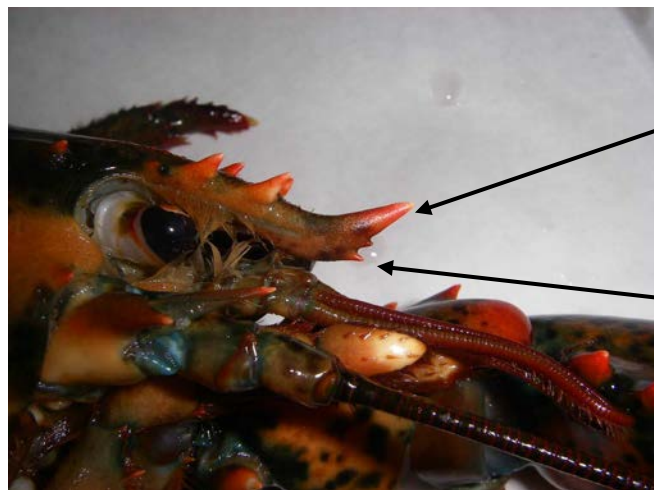
As American lobster is not ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland, under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is an offence to release or allow this species to escape into the wild.



Key ID Features



Body olive green or greenish brown

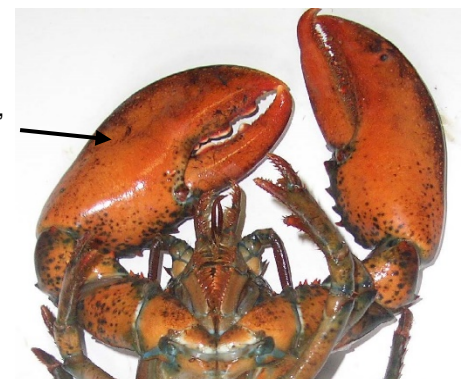


Spines on rostrum tend to be red

Ventral tooth

Orange, reddish, dark green or black speckles

Underside of claws, usually orange-red



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesireland.com/report-sighting>

Similar Species

The American lobster can be confused with the European Lobster. Both are characterised by large recognisable claws (chelae). American Lobsters are generally bigger than European Lobster, growing to approximately 30cm (but can reach 65cm). Distinguishing between the two species is difficult and may require expert assistance. The spines on the rostrum (a - American Lobster; b - European Lobster) are the most characteristic feature.

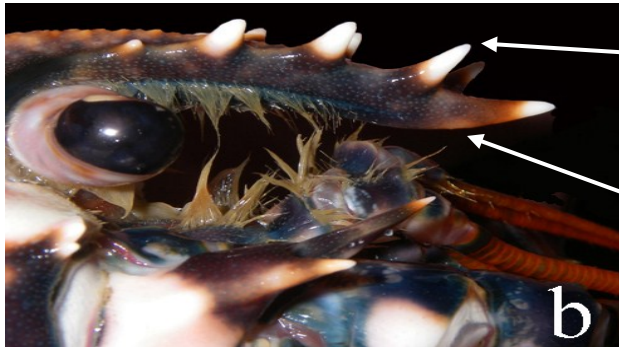
American lobster (*Homarus americanus*)



Spines on rostrum tend to be red tipped

Spines on rostrum tend to be red tipped

European lobster (*Homarus gammarus*)

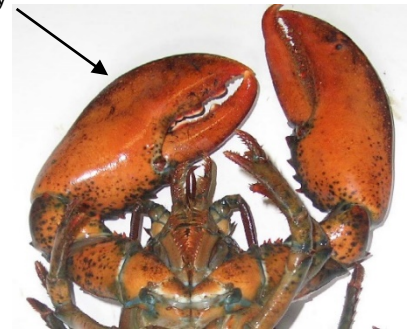


Rostrum spines white tipped

No ventral tooth

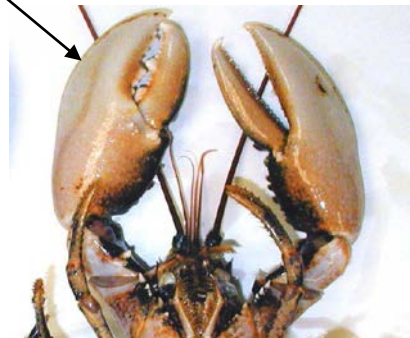
Underside of claws usually orange-red

American lobster



Underside of claws usually cream colour

European lobster



Olive green or greenish brown

Orange, reddish, dark green or black speckles

American lobster



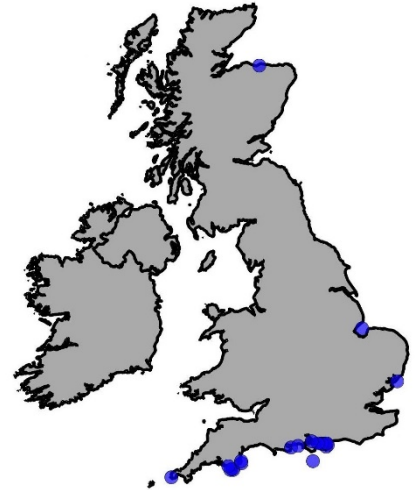
Cream tubercles

Blue to dark blue

European lobster

Distribution

Recorded along south coast of England.



Source: NBN atlas – available at <https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0021049553>
Check website for current distribution

References and further reading:

CABI datasheet *Homarus americanus* (American lobster) available at <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/79674>
Information brochure on the American lobster (Fisheries and Ocean Canada) available at <https://catalogue.ogsl.ca/en/dataset/e9d86c62-9cbb-4cd4-83a2-cff29e626090>
Photographs: Natural History Museum, Cefas, FAO and St. Laurence Global Observatory

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

Adapted for Northern Ireland Environment Agency 2020