



Rare Animals of Louisiana

Kisatchie painted crawfish

Orconectes maletae

Rarity Rank: S2/G2

Identification:

- A member of the painted crawfish group— with red, white (or yellow or cream), and blue markings.
- Cephalothorax to ca. 40 mm long. Rostrum is acuminate with lateral spines.
- Areola is closed.
- Chelae are relatively long and stout.
- Apex of the first pleopod of form I males are relatively long, slender and distinctly curved.
- Color pattern is olive to brown with crimson highlights on the postorbital ridges, the central joints of the pereiopods, and to a lesser extent the posterior margins of the abdominal segments, including the uropods.
- Colors of the fingers of the chelae are, successively from base to tips, brown or greenish brown, blue, cream or yellow and red.
- Essentially identical to *O. blacki* except that the projections of the apex of the first pleopod of form I males are relatively long, slender and distinctly curved



Photo by Steve Shively

Taxonomic comments: Medium to large genus with 21+ species; species name honors Maleta Walls, the wife of LNHP contractor, Jerry Walls.

Habitat: Small streams, primarily the Kisatchie Bayou drainage in Natchitoches Parish and Bayou Teche watershed in Rapides Parish

Food habits: Plants and carrion

Reproduction:

- Male deposits sperm in external receptacle on underside of female, who, in turn, fertilizes eggs as they are excreted.
- Eggs and young are held under female abdomen amongst pleopods (swimming legs) until they are large enough to crawl and swim about on their own.

Threats:

- Conversion of forests to agricultural uses
- Practices that lead to increased sediment loads in streams
- Practices that lead to loss of shade in the water
- Impoundments



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Beneficial Management Practices:

- BMPs for streamside management zones
- Shade retention

U. S. Range: LA, TX

References:

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