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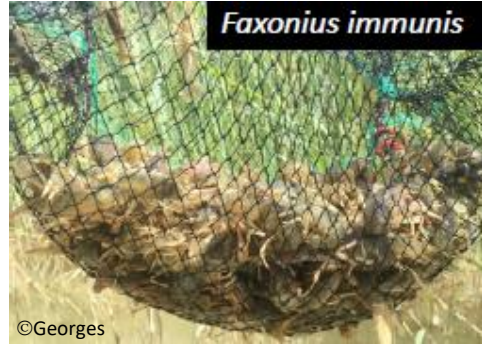
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Adaptive ponds for mitigating effects of invasive crayfish in Western Europe



Calico crayfish, *Faxonius immunis*, originates from North America. It was first observed in the Upper Rhine Valley in 1993 (DEHUS et al., 1999) and disperses along the river catchment. Thanks to a rapid life cycle, high fecundity, omnivore feeding, high terrestrial dispersion, this species has a high invasive potential (CHUCHOLL, 2012). It carries crayfish plague. In small standing waters, its preferential habitat, population can attain very high densities. Its burrowing behavior tips ponds into turbid water alternative states, causes the disappearance of macrophytes, and poses a threat to amphibians and macroinvertebrates (HERRMANN et al., 2022).

Wetland restoration



In the Neuburg-Woerr area, between France & Germany, a pond network was created between 2011 and 2015. The goal of the project was to restore wetlands habitats, in particular, for herpetofauna and in general for aquatic biodiversity. From 2012 aquatic fauna and flora were surveyed regularly.



Adaptive management

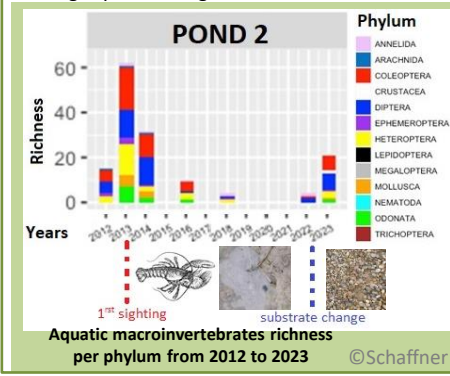


Oct. 2022 : New digging in Pond 2. Fine substrate removed and replaced by a substrate of gravel (4/8) and pebbles (16/32).



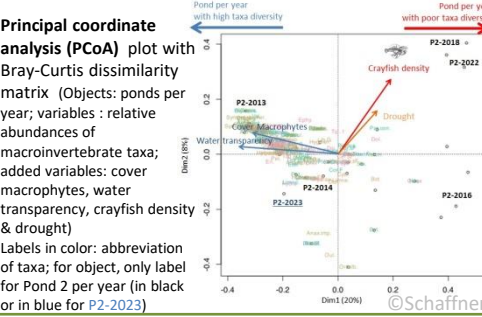
1st results

In 2023, in this first pond gravelled, one year ago, Calico crayfish cannot dig burrows and have not established a stable population yet. Nevertheless, macrophyte and macroinvertebrate communities are slightly recovering.



Macroinvertebrate population

After pond creation in 2012 macroinvertebrate taxa richness increased steadily before shrinking due to calico invasion, as well as dry conditions in the recent years. After the new digging and substrate changing in pond 2 in 2022, the taxa richness increased in 2023.



Conclusion: Limiting the spread of invasive crayfish is a current issue but quite impossible.

This collaborative and adaptive management between site managers and scientists could be a part of the solution to reduce their installation.

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