

# American Lobster

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on non-native species



## 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). Differences can be subtle, but the key characteristic is the ventral tooth on the rostrum of American Lobster. American Lobster may also be slightly larger and different in colour.

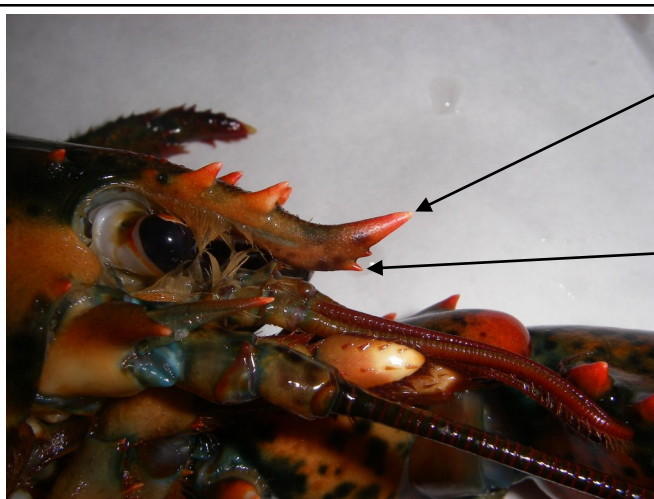
A serious risk in GB and Europe as it could have significant detrimental impacts on our native lobster through competition, interbreeding and by spreading disease. Very uncommon in GB waters (in the past decades there have been 24 confirmed reports in UK waters, although this is likely to be an underestimate). Not believed to be established in GB (i.e. reproducing) but this is possible. Sightings are believed to be as a result of the deliberate release or escape of specimens from captivity.

**Do not release or allow any non-native lobster to escape.**

**If you suspect you have seen this species, retain the sample and report it immediately to: 01305 206700, [FHI@Cefas.co.uk](mailto:FHI@Cefas.co.uk) or [alert\\_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk)**



Body olive green or greenish brown

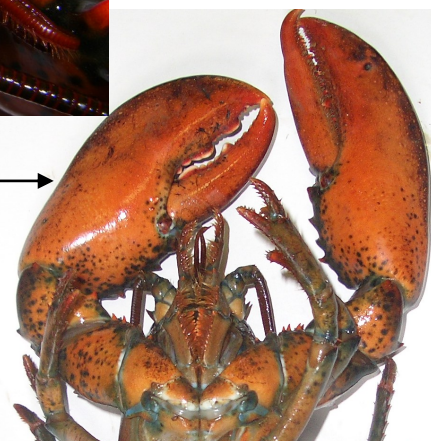


Spines on rostrum tend to be red tipped

Ventral tooth

Orange, reddish, dark green or black speckles

Underside of claws usually orange-red



# 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.

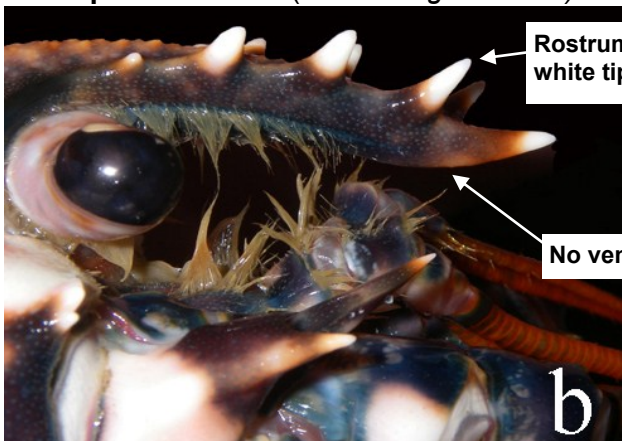
**American Lobster** (*Homarus americanus*)



Spines on rostrum tend to be red tipped

Ventral tooth

**European Lobster** (*Homarus gammarus*)



Rostrum spines white tipped

No ventral tooth



Olive green or greenish brown

Orange, reddish, dark green or black speckles



Cream speckles

Blue to dark blue

**American Lobster**

**European Lobster**

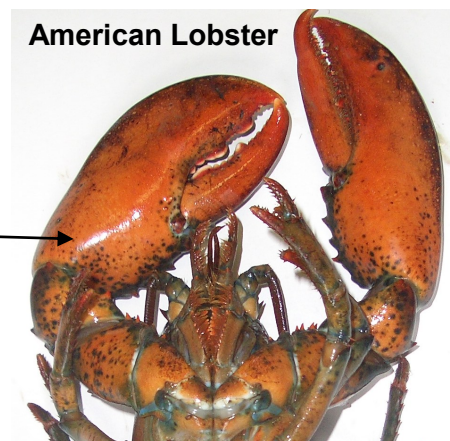
## Distribution

Few isolated records. Not common.



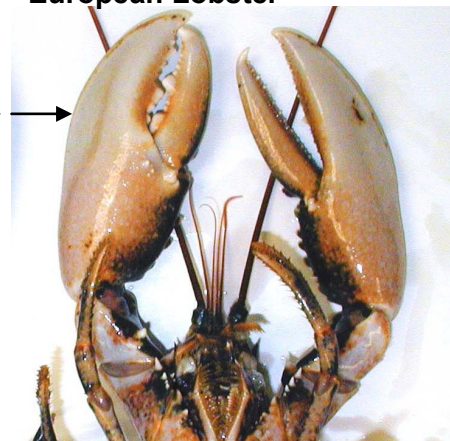
Source: Stebbing *et al* 2012

**American Lobster**



Underside of claws usually orange-red

**European Lobster**



Underside of claws usually cream colour

### References and further reading:

Stebbing, P., P. Johnson, A. Delahunty, P. Clark, T. McCollin, C. Hale and S. Clark. *BioInvasions Records* (2012) Volume 1, Issue 1

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/?com-pid=5&dsid=79674&loadmodule=datasheet&page=481&site=144>

<http://nlbif.eti.uva.nl/bis/lobsters.php?selected=beschrijving&menuentry=soorten&id=87>

<http://slgo.ca/en/lobster/context.html>