

Crustaceans to be commercially harvested from Lake Tahoe

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A Nevada man could begin pulling crayfish out of Lake Tahoe's waters by next spring following action by state wildlife officials.

On Saturday, the Nevada Wildlife Commission unanimously approved regulations authorizing the commercial harvest of crayfish from Tahoe's Nevada waters.

While approval from other agencies is required, the action should clear the way for Fred Jackson of Yerington to pursue his plan to harvest crayfish in 2012. Others could also apply for permits to do so at a cost of \$500.

"I think it's great for everybody," Jackson said. "It's a win for the lake and a win for the economy."

Millions of crayfish skitter along Tahoe's bottom in what Jackson views as an untapped, tasty resource. Crayfish, also known as crawdads, are not native to the lake and were first introduced there in the late 1800s, according to research conducted by scientists at UNR and UC Davis.

By 1932, crayfish were "thriving in the lake and its tributaries" and numbered about 55 million in 1967, scientists estimate. Today their numbers are put at 220 million or more.

Crayfish may be associated with algae blooms at Tahoe and could also be linked to a 72 percent decline in the population of mayflies, stoneflies and other native invertebrates in the lake, said Sudeep Chandra, a freshwater science expert at UNR.

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