



The marbled crayfish threatens to crowd out seven native species in Madagascar.

► *Nature* paper<sup>3</sup> showing that all members of the species they surveyed were female and reproduced through parthenogenesis — a process by which an unfertilized egg develops into an adult with a genome identical to its mother's. How the first marbled crayfish gained the ability to reproduce through parthenogenesis is a mystery, says Lyko.

To better understand the species' spread,

Lyko's team did more-limited DNA sequencing of 49 individuals caught across Madagascar. These studies showed a stunning lack of genetic diversity, owing presumably to the species' recent origin and ability to reproduce through parthenogenesis.

Julia Jones, a conservation scientist at Bangor University, UK, who first identified<sup>4</sup> marbled crayfish in Madagascar in 2007, says that the

species' spread is due largely to their popularity as a food source. In 2009, she met a man on a bus carrying a plastic bag full of them that he planned to dump into his rice fields in the hope of creating a sustainable stock, she says.

Stopping their spread in Madagascar will be "almost impossible", says Lyko. Collaborators there have begun campaigns urging people not to transport the creatures or release them into rice fields. The message is a hard sell in a country where poverty levels are high and marbled crayfish are a cheap and popular source of protein. Lyko's colleague brought a few dozen that she had caught to a family barbecue. "This went down quite well," he says. ■

1. Gutekunst, J. *et al. Nature Ecol. Evol.* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/s41559-018-0467-9> (2018).
2. Martin, P., Thonagel, S. & Scholtz, G. *J. Zool. Syst. Evol. Res.* **54**, 13–21 (2016).
3. Scholtz, G. *et al. Nature* **421**, 806 (2003).
4. Jones, J. P. G. *et al. Biol. Invasions* **11**, 1475–1482 (2009).

#### CORRECTION

The News Feature 'The science that's never been cited' (*Nature* **552**, 162–164; 2017) originally included a link to the data behind the charts. *Nature* has subsequently been told that the data are not available to make public, so the link has been removed online.