

Killer Shrimp

Species Description

Scientific name: *Dikerogammarus villosus*

AKA: Killer Shrimp

Native to: South-east Europe

Habitat: Still or flowing freshwater and brackish water, often among hard surfaces or vegetation.

A highly invasive shrimp, with only a few known populations in GB. A key ID feature is the presence of cone shaped protrusions on the tail. Often larger than native freshwater shrimp species and sometimes with a striped appearance.

It is a voracious predator, killing invertebrates and small fish. It quickly dominates habitats it invades and can significantly alter their ecology.

It is tolerant of poor water quality and can survive in damp conditions for up to five days. It could therefore be spread in ballast water and also by people on kit used in the water, including angling gear, boats, kayaks and trailers. Good biosecurity is essential to reduce the risk of spread.

As a non-resident species it could be an offence to release or allow the escape of this species into the wild.

Suspected records of this species should be sent with a photograph to: alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk



Key ID Features



Larger than native shrimps. Size varies depending on age. Can grow to 30mm from tip of tail to tip of head, more commonly 10-20mm (relatively large for a freshwater amphipod).

Usually has striped back, but can be more uniform in colour

Tail with distinctive cones

Additional Information about this species can be found at:

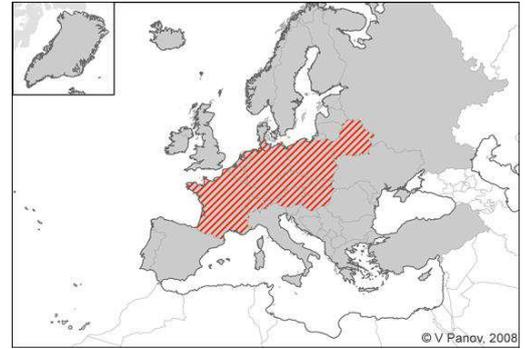
www.nonnativespecies.org

Recording

If you suspect you have found this species please send a record, including a photograph to:

alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Non-native European Distribution



Source: Daisie. Map © V. Panov (2008)

Similar Species

Dikerogammarus villosus

Non-native
For comparison



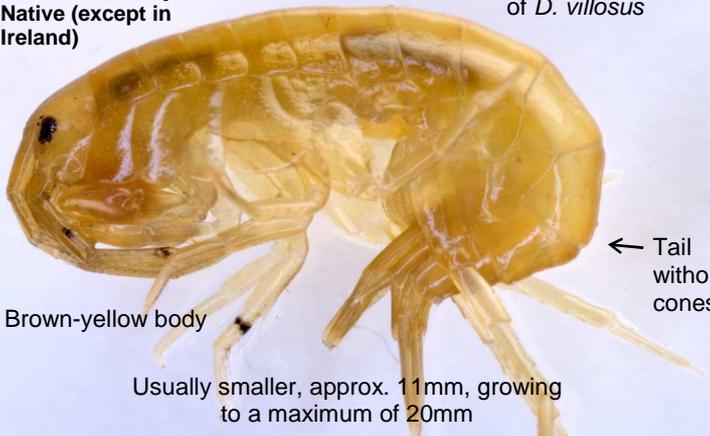
← Tail with distinctive cones

Usually considerably larger than native species. Can grow to 30mm from tip of tail to tip of head, more commonly 10-20mm.

Gammarus pulex

Native (except in Ireland)

Lacks dark stripes of *D. villosus*



← Tail without cones

Brown-yellow body

Usually smaller, approx. 11mm, growing to a maximum of 20mm

Gammarus tigrinus

Non-native

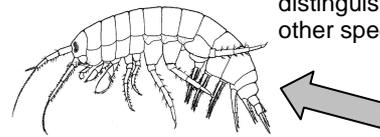
Dark marks but lacks banding of *D. villosus*



← Tail without cones

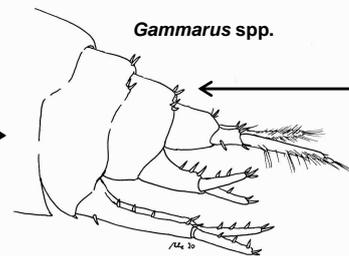
Usually smaller, approx. 10-15mm long

Tail features can be used to distinguish *D. villosus* from other species as follows:



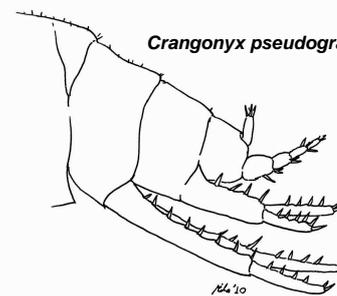
Dikerogammarus villosus

Two distinctive cone-shaped protrusions topped with small spines.



Gammarus spp.

Small clusters of spines or hairs, but no protrusions.



Crangonyx pseudogracilis

May have small hairs, but lacks spines or protrusions.

Line drawings © M.Dobson/FBA

References and further reading:

Daisie Factsheet (www.europe-aliens.org)

Nobanis Factsheet (www.nobanis.org)

www.habitas.org.uk/invasive/