NNSS
GB non-native species secretariat

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Produced by the Non-native Species Secretariat with assistance from the
Freshwater Biological Association and Environment Agency

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, considerably larger than native fresh-water shrimp species. It often has a striped appearance.

The first report of this species in GB was on the 3 September 2010 at Grafham Water, Cambridgeshire. It is a voracious predator, killing invertebrates and small fish. It quickly dominates habitats it invades and can significantly alter their ecology.

It is 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 spreading this species.

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

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

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).

Tail with distinctive cones
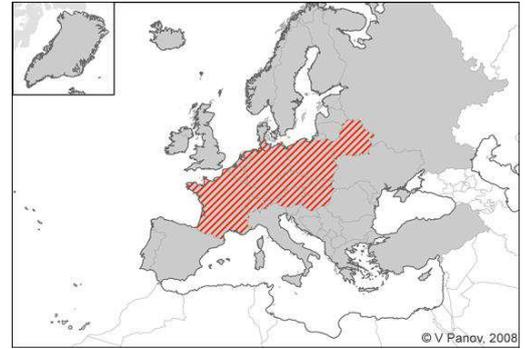
Recording

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
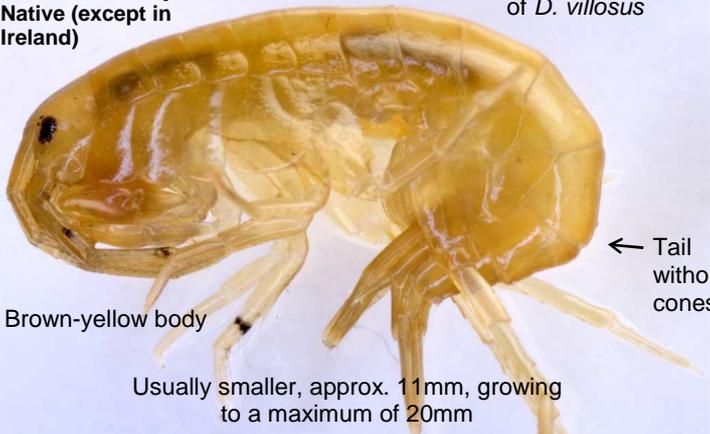**Non-native**
For comparison

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

← Tail with distinctive cones

Gammarus pulex
Native (except in Ireland)

Lacks dark stripes of *D. villosus*

Brown-yellow body

Usually smaller, approx. 11mm, growing to a maximum of 20mm
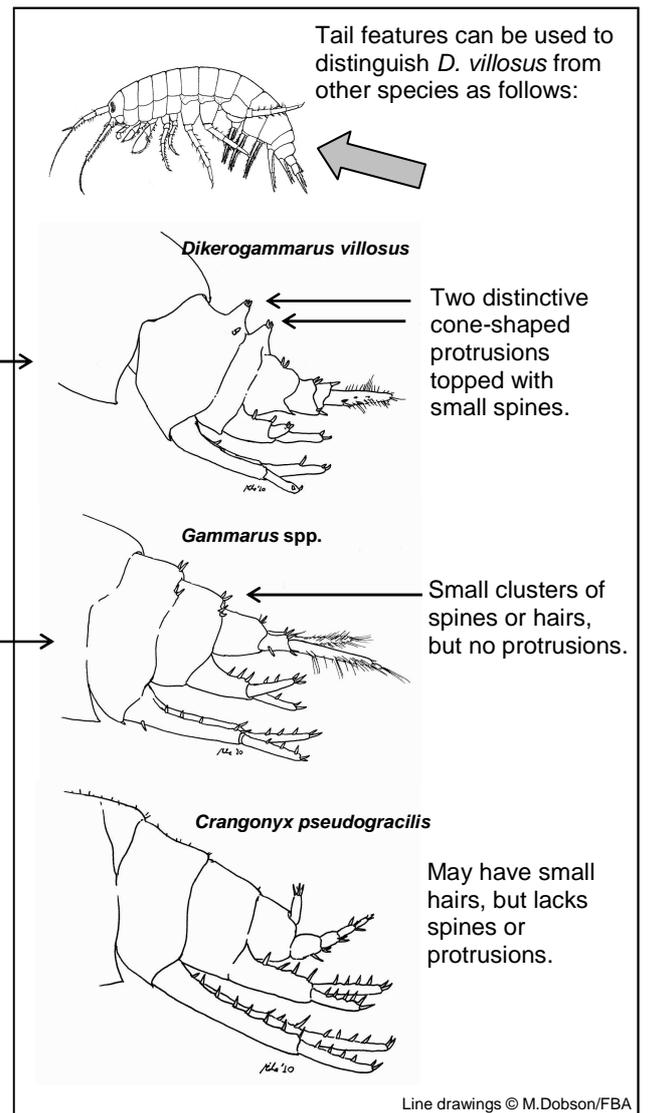
← Tail without cones

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/

Photos from: Phase4 Environmental Limited, Michal Grabowski