

Killer shrimp

Dikerogammarus villosus

**Potential invader:
High impact**

Species profile

- Habitat:** Freshwater. Also brackish and transitional waters.
- Distribution in Ireland:** Not currently recorded in Ireland.
- Status:** Not yet known to occur in Ireland.
- Family name:** Gammaridae.
- Reproduction:** Breeding takes place all year long as long as water temperature is above 13°C. Up to 194 eggs can be produced, the eggs hatch and the juveniles emerge from the females brood pouch.



Killer Shrimp showing cone shape protrusion at the end of the tail - Environment Agency

Identifying features

- Cone shape:** Species has a cone shaped protrusion on the tail.
- Size:** It is often larger than native freshwater shrimp species. Can grow up to 30mm.
- Stripes:** Species can have a black striped back which can form bands.



Life stages of killer shrimp - Environment Agency



Cone shaped protrusions appear on the tail - Environment Agency



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Threats

Predation could have a major impact on native freshwater invertebrates and small fish.

Can quickly invade an area and alter the ecology of the habitat.

Is tolerant of poor water conditions and can survive out of water (in damp conditions) for up to 5 days, allowing the species to be easily spread when equipment hygiene is not at a high level.

Similar species

Gammarus pulex – Smaller, lacking tail cones and dark stripes of *D. villosus*.

Gammarus tigrinus – Much smaller, have dark stripes but no banding, lacking tail cones.

Gammarus zaddachi – Slightly smaller with orange/red/brown markings at the side of the abdomen.



Gammarus tigrinus lacking the tail cones of the killer shrimp - J. Dick (Queens University Belfast)



Gammarus pulex, notice the absence of tail cones - J. Dick (Queens University Belfast)

