

Arthropods

31205 species in Sweden. The biggest group, the hexapods are treated in a separate presentation. The other three groups are Chelicerata, Myriopoda and the crustaceans.

Nearly all arthropods are easily recognisable by a hard exoskeleton and a large number of appendages, one from each body segment.

Chelicerata has 1906 species in Sweden. They are all characterized by eight legs, and head and body fused into one (cephalothorax). Mostly terrestrial, but some species are aquatic.

Myriopods has 97 species in Sweden. There are four classes but only two the Diplopoda and Chilopoda are big enough to likely ever be seen by most people. Myriopoda has two body parts, a head and a body but no distinct abdomen. All body segments have one pair of legs.

Crustaceans has 1578 species in Sweden. They are heterogeneous but generally has three distinct parts, a head with appendages adapted for feeding, a body with appendages adapted to walking and an abdomen which often has reduced or shorter appendages, but sometimes appendages for swimming.

Nearly everything you encounter in Sweden which is visible to the naked eye is included in one of the groups discussed but many microscopic forms, several parasites and a few deep water marine organisms are not discussed and some introduced animals who have not yet established themselves in Sweden may not be correctly identified.

Arachnida: Arachnids/Spindeldjur



Pseudoscorpiones

Pseudoscorpions/Klokrypare



Identification

- Pear-shaped or round body.
- Two scorpion-like claws.

Potential misidentifications

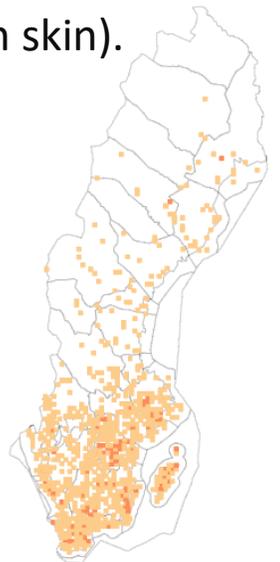
- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- In leaf litter, moss, hollow trees, or in the case of one species, indoors. Predators on other small invertebrates.
- Venomous (but cannot penetrate human skin).

Body size

1 – 7 mm



Acari Mites/Kvalster



Arthropoda

Arachnida

Acari (1068 Swedish species)

3 nested within

Identification

- No visible division between cephalothorax and abdomen.
- Oval body.
- Eight legs, each with six segments.

Potential misidentifications

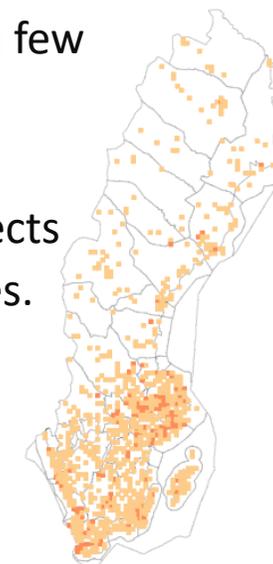
- Misidentifications are unlikely although only a small number of species are visible to the naked eye.

Habitat

- Primarily on land or in freshwater, but a few species in saltwater.
- Predators, herbivores or parasites.
- Many species uses beetles or other insects to transport them between food sources.

Body size

0.1 – 7 mm



Ixodida

Ticks/Fästingar



Filled with blood

Arthropoda

Arachnida

Acari

Identification

- Mites with flattened, hardened bodies.
- Can be very swollen and round when filled with blood.
- Mouthparts form a hardened “beak”.

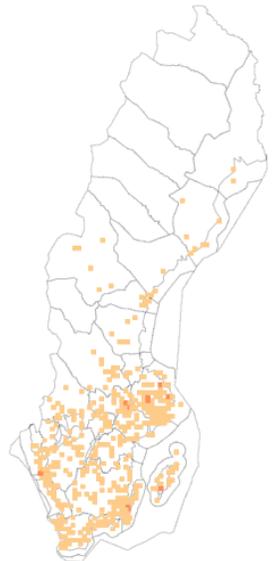
Potential misidentifications

- Other mites lack the clear beak.

Habitat

- Blood-sucking parasites on various vertebrates.

Body size (unfed) 2 – 5 mm



Ixodida (12 Swedish species)

Opiliones Harvestmen/Lockespindlar

5 nested within

Identification

- Abdomen, thorax and head fused into a single round body.
- Generally with very long, thin legs (but see Arthropod nr. 5).

Potential misidentifications

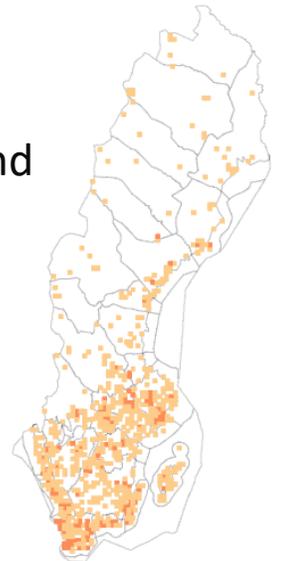
- Long-legged spiders particular Long-bodied cellar spider (Arthropod nr. 7) are sometimes mistaken for harvestmen but all spiders have clearly separated abdomen and cephalothorax.

Habitat

- Various terrestrial habitats, on the ground or in vegetation.

Body size

1.5 – 9 mm



Nemastoma sp.
Nemastoma/Fläcklockar



Identification

- Very short legs for a harvestman.
- Nearly all specimens are black with two distinct white spots.

Potential misidentifications

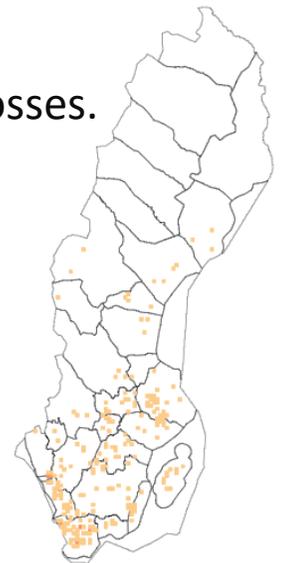
- The few individuals without white spots can be mistaken for the rare *Mitostoma chrysomelas* (not in Western Sweden) but it is brownish rather than black.

Habitat

- Common in litter of forest floor or in mosses.

Body size

5 – 9 mm



Araneae Spiders/Spindlar



Arthropoda

Arachnida

Araneae (776 Swedish species)

7-15 nested within

Identification

- Body separated into abdomen and head/thorax (cephalothorax).
- Males with “boxing glove” appendages at the mouth (pedipalps).
- Varying number of ocelli (eye spots).
- Many but far from all create nets to catch food.

Potential misidentifications

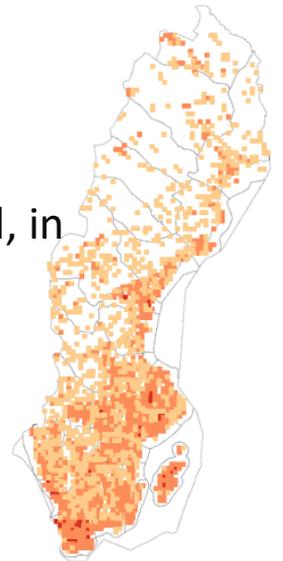
- Often mistaken with harvestmen (Arthropod nr. 4) but harvestmen have head, thorax and abdomen fused into one.

Habitat

- In all terrestrial habitats – on the ground, in low vegetation or in trees. A few species semi-aquatic, one species amphibious.

Body size

1.5 – 24 mm



Pholcus phalangioides

Long-bodied cellar spider/Större dallerspindel



Identification

- Extremely long legs.
- Large, randomly arranged open webs.

Potential misidentifications

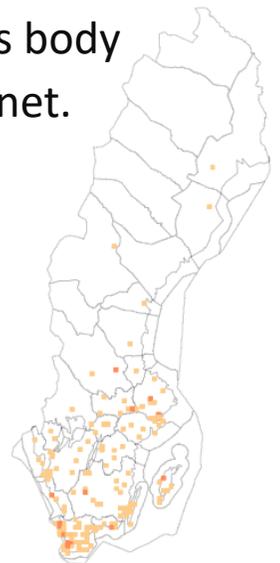
- *P. opilionides* (only in Skåne) is similar but smaller (3-5.5 mm).
- Harvestmen (Arthropod nr. 4) have similarly long legs, but with cephalothorax and abdomen fused.

Habitat

- Mostly indoors, also in caves. Vibrates its body intensely to scare off predators from its net.

Body size

7 – 10 mm



Agelenidae

Funnel weavers/Trattspindlar



Identification

- Two conspicuous spinners at the end of abdomen distinctly larger than in other spiders.
- Covered in hairs.
- Relatively long legs.
- Funnel-shaped webs.

Potential misidentifications

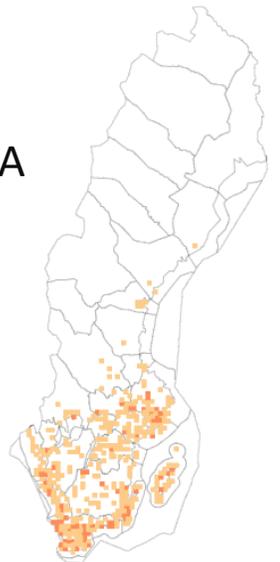
- If seen outside net mistakable for wolf spiders (Arthropod nr. 9), but these lack conspicuous spinners at the back.

Habitat

- Various habitats, usually on the ground. A couple of species common in cellars.

Body size

5 – 16 mm



Lycosidae

Wolf spiders/Vargspindlar



Identification

- Covered in dense hair, relatively robust.
- Often with clear markings and patterns.
- Legs oriented out from body.
- Females often carry white egg-sack under abdomen.

Potential misidentifications

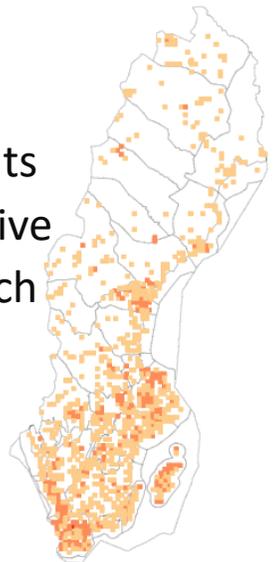
- Funnel weavers (Arthropod nr. 8), but these have two conspicuous spinners at the back. Next two groups (Arthropod nr. 10-11) look similar but has distinct coloration.

Habitat

- On the ground, especially in open habitats (e.g. heathlands) but also in forests. Active predators – they do not spin nets to catch prey.

Body size

2.8 – 17 mm



Dolomedes sp. Fishing spiders/Kärrspindlar



Identification

- Large, often with all legs held stretched outward, making it look even larger.
- Brown, with light stripes along the sides.

Potential misidentifications

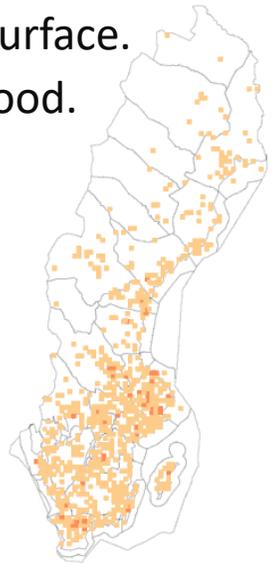
- Similar to a wolf spiders (Arthropod nr. 9), and the nursery web spider (Arthropod nr. 11) but clearly distinct by size and coloration.

Habitat

- Swampy areas, often hunting on water surface.
- Active hunters not using webs to catch food.

Body size

9 – 20 mm



Pisaura mirabilis Nursery web spider/Presentspindel



Identification

- Medium to large spiders, often with all legs held stretched outward.
- Light brown body with one very light stripe down the centre of body.

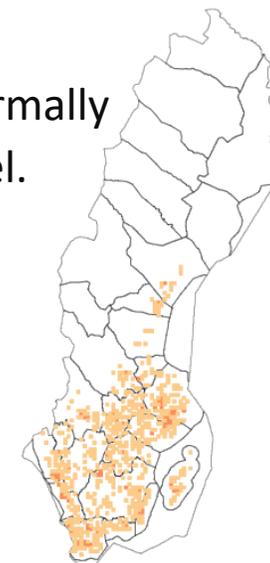
Potential misidentifications

- Superficially similar to a wolf spiders (Arthropod nr. 9), and fishing spiders (Arthropod nr. 10) but clearly distinct by coloration.

Habitat

- Generally found in open vegetation, normally in vegetation rather than at ground level.
- Active hunters not using webs to catch food.

Body size 9 – 15 mm



Arthropoda

Arachnida

Araneae

Pisauridae

Pisaura mirabilis

Salticidae

Jumping spiders/Hoppspindlar



Salticus scenicus



Marpissa muscosa



Evarcha falcata

Identification

- Square, flat face with two large and two smaller forward-pointing eyes.
- Short, stocky body.
- Relatively robust legs, generally held close to body.
- Moves in quick, snappy bursts and jumps.

Potential misidentifications

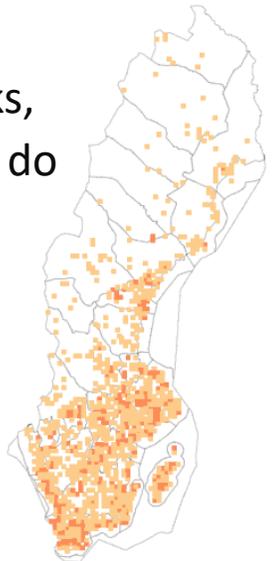
- Easily distinguished by body shape and the charismatic face.

Habitat

- Various, generally open habitats, on rocks, house walls etc. Active predators – they do not spin nets to catch prey.

Body size

1.7 – 10 mm



Araneus diadematus

European garden spider/Korsspindel

Identification

- With a characteristic white cross pattern on abdomen.
- Female with large round abdomen, male smaller with thinner abdomen.
- Circular web.

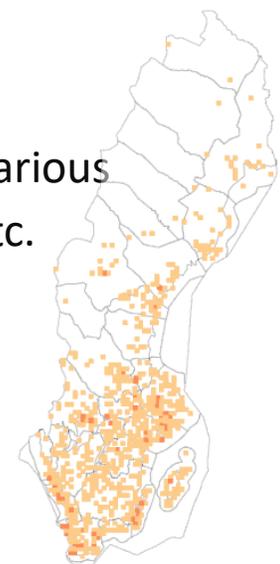
Potential misidentifications

- Four-spot orb-weaver (Arthropod nr. 14) is similar, but has four white spots in a square pattern rather than the cross.

Habitat

- In bushes and other low vegetation in various habitats – woods, heathland, gardens etc.

Body size (F)	10 – 18 mm
Body size (M)	4 – 8 mm



Araneus quadratus

Four-spot orb-weaver/Kvadratspindel



Identification

- Abdomen yellow to red.
- With four distinct white spots on abdomen.
- Female with large round abdomen, male smaller with thinner abdomen.
- Circular web.

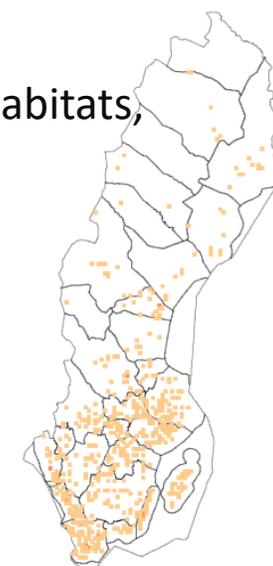
Potential misidentifications

- European garden spider (Arthropod nr. 13) is similar, but has a cross rather than four white spots.

Habitat

- Builds webs in low vegetation in open habitats, meadows etc.

Body size (F)	9 – 20 mm
Body size (M)	6 – 8 mm



Argyroneta aquatica

Water spider/Vattenspindel



Identification

- Two back pair of legs dense with long, thin hairs.
- Abdomen covered in fine, grey, silky hairs that trap air when under water.
- Only spider in the world that can dive below water.

Potential misidentifications

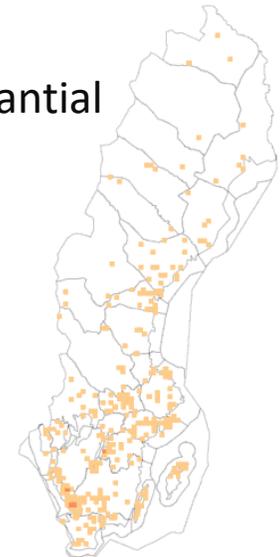
- No other species has long hairs on the two back legs only.
- Nearly always also identifiable by habitat.

Habitat

- Only spider in the world spending substantial time under water.



Body size 8 – 15 mm



Diplopoda: Millipedes/Dubbelfotingar



Diplopoda

Millipedes/Dubbelfotingar

17-18 nested within

Identification

- Segments grown together two and two so there are two pairs of thin, short legs per “segment”.
- Legs oriented down under the body.
- Body usually cylindrical.

Potential misidentifications

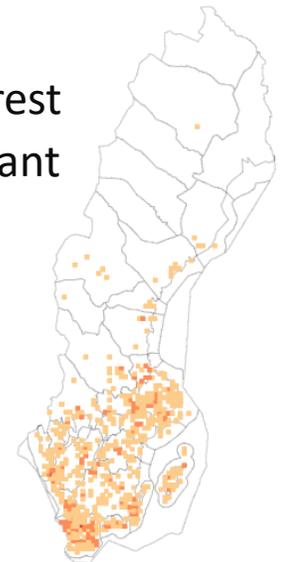
- Woodlice (Arthropod nr. 27) have fewer legs (seven) and are shorter. Centipedes (Arthropod nr. 19-21) have longer legs.

Habitat

- Various habitats, usually not too dry (forest litter, dead wood, etc). They eat dead plant material.

Body size

2 – 38 mm



Glomeris marginata Pill millipede/Klotfoting



Identification

- Short, heavily armored millipede.
- Capable of rolling into a ball.
- Shiny black with yellowish edges to each segment
- 17 (females) or 19 (males) pairs of legs.

Potential misidentifications

- Pill bugs (Arthropod nr. 30) are similar, but pill millipedes roll into asymmetrical balls and are usually darker (black) in colour and only has 7 pairs of legs.

Habitat

- In leaf litter.



Body size 7 – 20 mm



Polydesmida

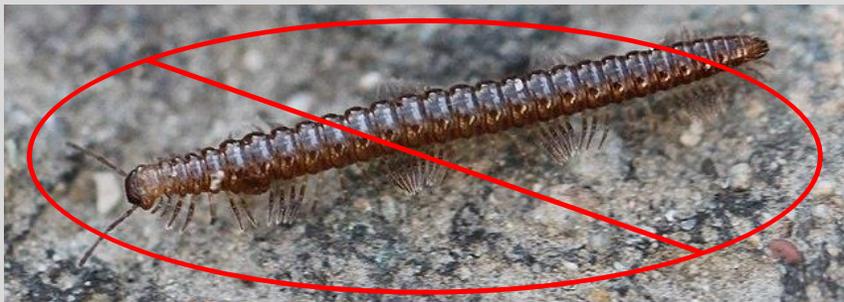
Polydesmida/Banddubbelfotingar



Polydesmus denticulatus



Oxidus gracilis



Identification

- Millipedes with distinct outgrowth on the sides making the millipedes look flat whereas other millipedes look round.
- 18-19 body rings (each with two pairs of legs) in adults.
- No eyes.

Potential misidentifications

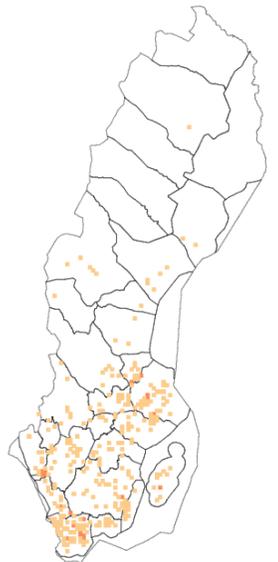
- Most other millipedes lack the outgrowths and therefore look rounder. Only one other family (Craspedosomatidea/ Knöldubbelfotingar) has similar outgrowths but they have 25 body rings and distinct eyes.

Habitat

- Similar to other millipedes.

Body size

4.5 – 21 mm



Chilopoda: Centipedes/Enkelfotingar



Geophilomorpha

Soil centipedes/Jordkrypare



Identification

- One pair of relatively long legs per body segment.
- Large, powerful mandibles.
- Very long, slender, with flexible body.
- Usually pale (white or yellowish).
- At least 31 pairs of legs.

Potential misidentifications

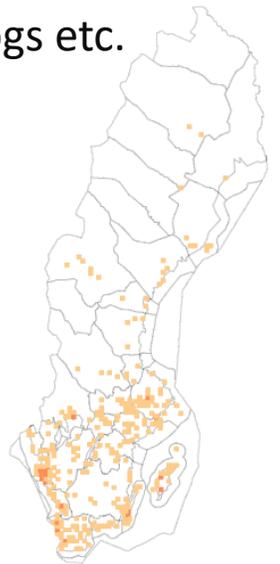
- Readily identifiable by leg number.

Habitat

- Found in leaf-litter, under rocks, in old logs etc.
- Fast and active predators of other invertebrates

Body size

10 – 60 mm



Lithobiomorpha

Stone centipedes/Stenkrypare



Identification

- One pair of relatively long legs per body segment.
- Large, powerful mandibles.
- Relatively robust.
- Body surface hard, brownish/reddish.
- 15 pairs of legs.

Potential misidentifications

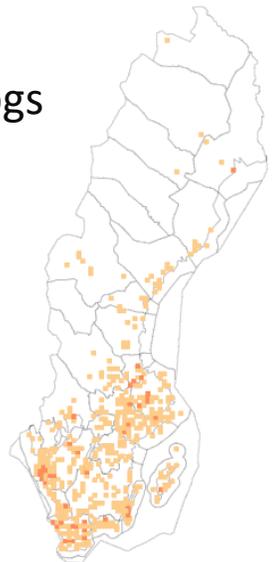
- Similar to scolopenders (Arthropod nr. 20) but scolopenders have 21 pairs of legs.

Habitat

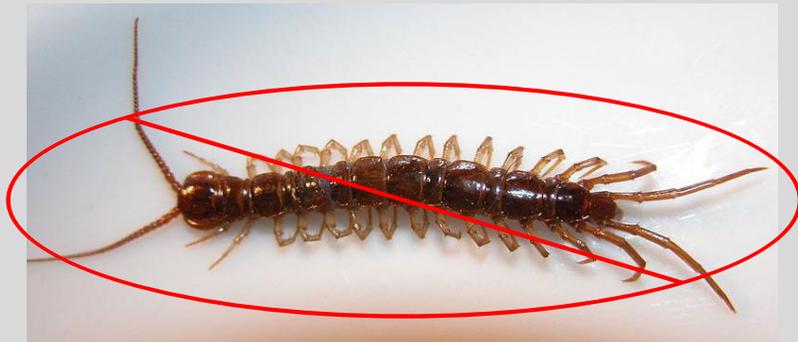
- Found in leaf-litter, under rocks, in old logs etc.
- Fast and active predators of other invertebrates.

Body size

4 – 31 mm



Cryptops sp. *Cryptops*/Småskolopendrar



Identification

- One pair of relatively long legs per body segment.
- Large, powerful mandibles.
- Relatively robust.
- Body surface hard, brownish/reddish.
- 21 pairs of legs.

Potential misidentifications

- Stone centipedes (Arthropod nr. 19) look similar but only has 15 pairs of legs.

Habitat

- Rare and mainly seen in parks.

Body size

15 – 30 mm



Thecostraca: Barnacles/Rankfotingar



Thoracica

Barnacles/Havstulpaner



Identification

- Adults are sessile and attached to substrate with calcareous plates or rarely with a muscular stalk where the plates are attached to.
- Adults have legs that are transformed into filtering arms.

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

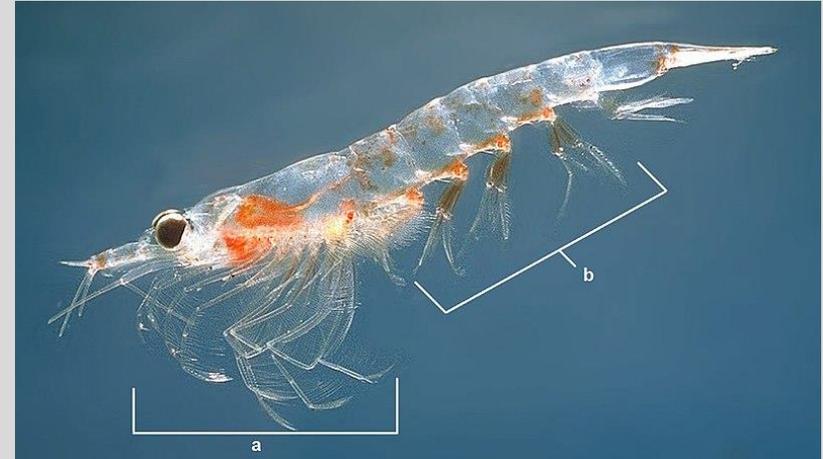
- Brackish or marine.
- Attached to substrate or other organisms.

Diameter

Up to 4 cm

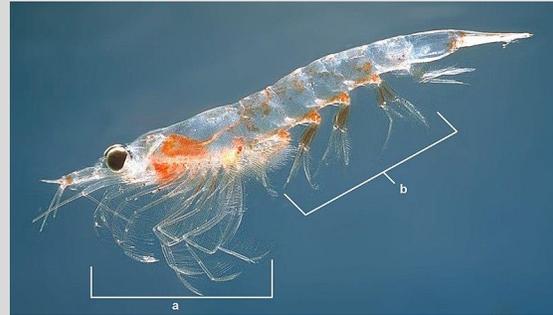


Malacostraca: Malacostraca/Storkräftor



Malacostraca

Malacostraca/Storkräftor



24-46 nested within

Identification

- Head with five segments.
- Thorax (middle body) with eight segments.
- Five to eight pairs of the appendages from thorax large and leglike, the last zero to three small and serving as functional mouthparts.
- Abdomen (tail) with six (rarely seven) segments.

Potential misidentifications

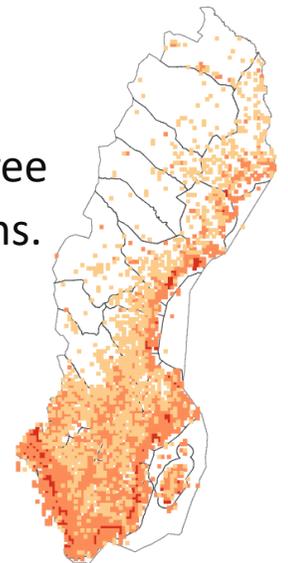
- No similar groups in Sweden.

Habitat

- Terrestrial, freshwater or marine water.
- Marine groups either pelagic (living in free water masses) or on soft or hard bottoms.

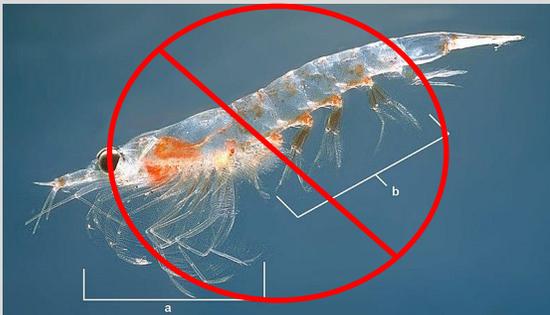
Body size

Up to 64 cm



Mysida

Opossum shrimps/Pungräkor



Identification

- Slender.
- Eight pairs of legs.
- Stalked eyes.
- Soft exoskeleton.
- No visible gills.

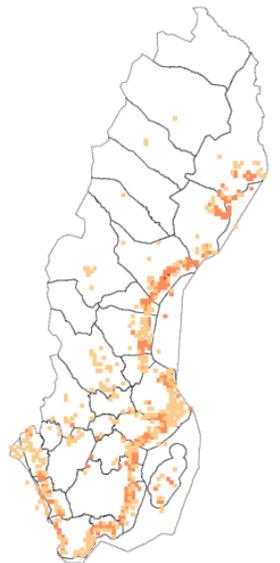
Potential misidentifications

- Can be mistaken for krill (Arthropod nr. 25) or true shrimps (Arthropod nr. 34) but identifiable by the number of legs and lack of visible gills.

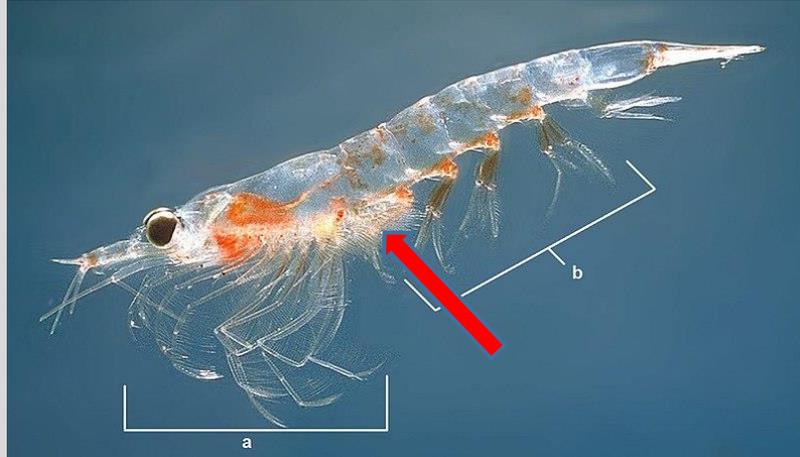
Habitat

- Freshwater, brackish and marine waters.
- Marine species from intertidal to 100 meters.

Body size 10 – 30 mm



Euphausiacea Krill/Krill



Identification

- Straight body outline.
- Parts of gills sticking out of carapace (see arrow).
- Seven pairs of legs.

Potential misidentifications

- Can be mistaken for opossum shrimps (Arthropod nr. 24) or true shrimps (Arthropod nr. 34) but different numbers of legs and identifiable by large visible gills.

Habitat

- Marine.
- Pelagic.
- Coastal and deep waters.



Body size

4 – 15 mm



Amphipoda

Amphipods/Märilkräftor



27 nested within

Identification

- Caprillidea (Arthropods nr. 27) is a subgroup that looks very different and discussed separately.
- Body sideways flattened, with curved back.
- Seven pairs of legs, some held backwards and some forwards, and several swimming appendages in the back.
- Modified claw-like appendages and two pairs of antennae.

Potential misidentifications

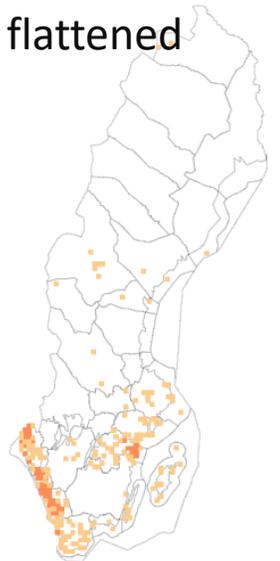
- Isopods (Arthropods nr. 28) but they are flattened from the top rather than from the side.

Habitat

- In aquatic environments, both fresh and saltwater, or on beaches.

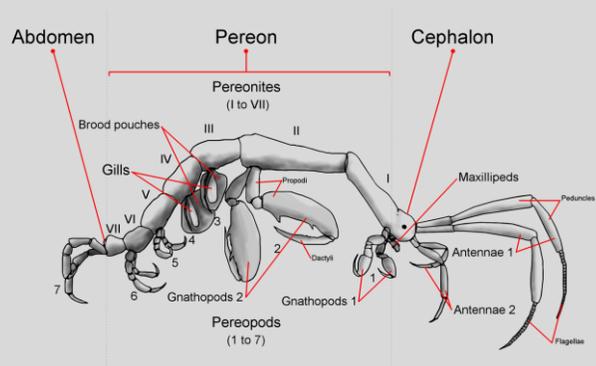
Body size

5 – 32 mm



Caprellidae

Skeleton shrimps/Spökräkor



Identification

- Extremely elongated body.
- Seven pairs of legs but first legs is modified as a claw.

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- All species are marine.
- Most species found in shallow water, normally seen attached to substrate as in picture.

Body size

Up to 20 mm



Isopoda

Woodlice & sealice/Gråsuggor och tånglöss

29-32 nested within

Identification

- Rigid, segmented exoskeletons.
- Two pairs of antennae.
- Flattened from the top.
- Seven pairs of legs.

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

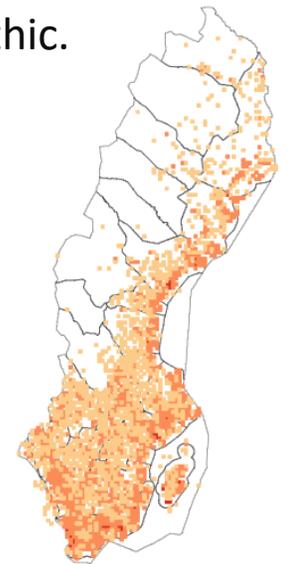
Habitat

- Land-living, freshwater, brackish or marine.
- The aquatic ones are nearly always benthic.



Body size

Up to 90 mm



Oniscidea Woodlice/Landgråsuggor

30-31 nested within

Identification

- Only terrestrial isopods (and only terrestrial crustaceans in Sweden).

Potential misidentifications

- Millipedes (Arthropod nr. 16) have more pairs of legs and usually longer bodies. Amphipods are laterally flattened.

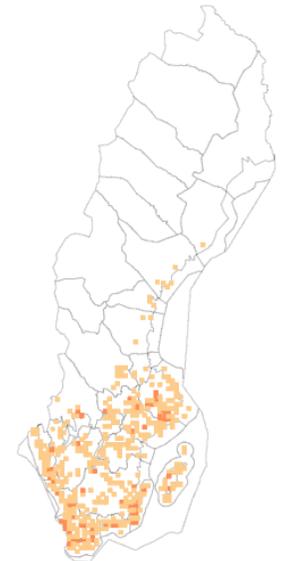
Habitat

- Feeding on organic debris in various moist places, e.g. leaf litter, under rocks etc.



Body size

1.5 – 30 mm



Armadillidiidae

Pill bugs/Klotgråsuggor



Identification

- Heavily armored, grey-black (but color varies).
- Can roll into a ball.

Potential misidentifications

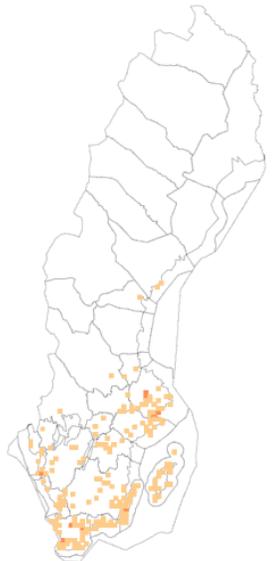
- Pill millipedes (Arthropod nr. 17) are often confused with it, but it has more legs.

Habitat

- In leaf litter.

Body size

6 – 18 mm



Ligia oceanica Sea slater/Strandgråsugga



Identification

- Very large (for an isopod).
- Antennae with many segments (10-20).

Potential misidentifications

- Other woodlice are smaller and with fewer antennal segments.
- Pond slaters (Arthropod nr. 32) looks similar but has an enlarged body segment at the back and a body that tapers towards the front.

Habitat

- Lives amphibiously on dead organic matter on the seacoast.

Body size ~30 mm



Asellidae

Pond slaters/Sötvattengråsuggor



Identification

- Final body segment large, with two long branched appendages.
- Long, thin antennae.
- Body tapering towards the front.

Potential misidentifications

- Sea slater (Arthropod nr. 31) is larger, has a different body shape and not the same enlarged final segment.

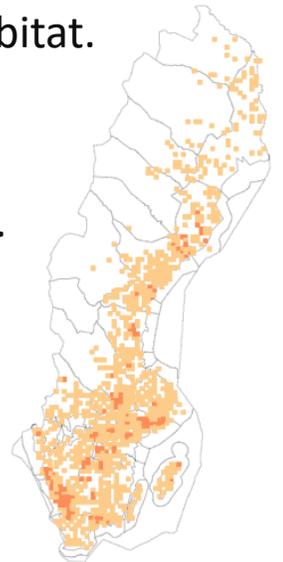
Some similar looking species are found in marine environments but are separatable by habitat.

Habitat

- In lakes and ponds rich in organic debris.

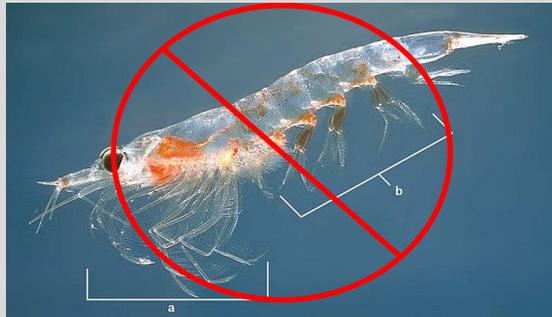
Body size

8 – 12 mm



Decapoda

Decapoda/Tiofotade kräftdjur



34-46 nested within

Identification

- Fused head and thorax segments (=cephalothorax).
- Five leg pairs of legs, one of them may be modified to be claws.
- Abdomen may be folded onto thorax in some groups (as in crabs).
- Stalked eyes

Potential misidentifications

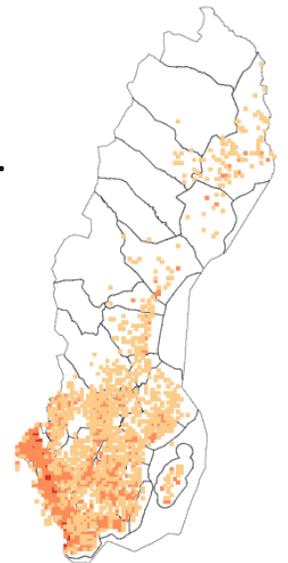
- Opossum shrimps and krill (Arthropod nr. 24-25) looks similar to some species but has more legs.

Habitat

- Freshwater, brackish and marine waters.
- Marine groups either pelagic or on soft or hard bottoms.

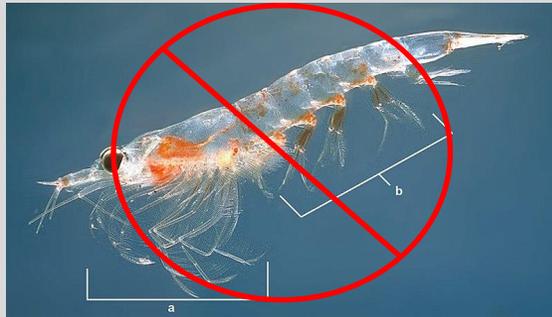
Body size

Up to 64 cm



Caridea

True shrimps/Egentliga räkor



Identification

- Only distinctly “shrimp-like” decapods.
- Abdomen distinctly segmented.

Potential misidentifications

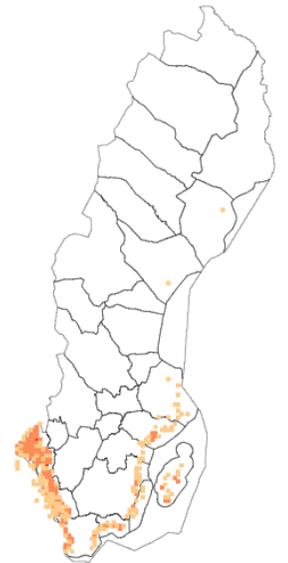
- Opossum shrimps and krill (Arthropod nr 23-24) looks similar but has more legs.

Habitat

- Marine or brackish water.
- Either pelagic or on soft or hard bottoms.

Body size

Up to 19 cm



Nephrops norvegicus Norway lobster/Havskräfta



Identification

- Similar body shape to a lobster but narrower.
- Pale orange color.
- Spiny claws.
- Kidney-shaped eyes.

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- Marine.
- Soft bottoms.
- Borrows for shelter during daytime.
- Usually 40-800 meters depth but can occur at 20 m.

Body size Up to 24 cm



Homarus sp. Lobsters/Humrar



Identification

- Usually black, sometimes blue, yellow or light brown.
- Large claws, one larger than the other one.

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- Marine.
- Rocky bottoms.
- Sometimes hides in clefts or among rocks.
- Shallow, rarely below 40 m.
- In summer they can occur intertidally.

Body size

Up to 64 cm



Pacifastacus leniusculus Signal crayfish/Signalkräfta



Identification

- Blueish to reddish brown crayfish with white or blue-green markings at the claw joints.

Potential misidentifications

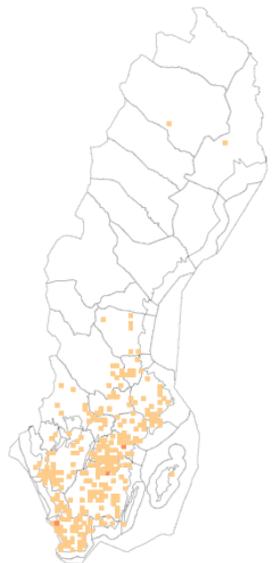
- The European crayfish (Arthropod nr. 38) looks similar, but without light marks at the claw joints and with smaller claws.

Habitat

- Invasive species from North America.
- Freshwater.
- In both running and still water.

Body size

App. 20 cm



Astacus astacus

European crayfish/Flodkräfta



Identification

- Dark to reddish brown or beige crayfish.

Potential misidentifications

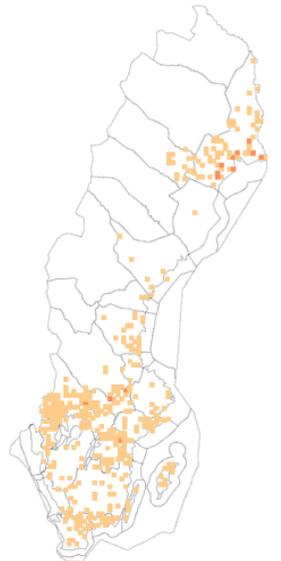
- The signal crayfish (Arthropod nr. 37) looks similar, but with light marks at the claw joints and larger claws.

Habitat

- Freshwater.
- In both running and still water.

Body size

App. 20 cm



Paguridae

Hermit crabs/Eremitkräftor



Identification

- Soft and twisted posterior end of body without hard exoskeleton.
- Uses empty shell or similar as protection of soft body.
- Differently sized claws, the right one usually larger.

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- Marine
- Hard and soft bottoms

Cephalothorax length Up to 35 mm



Polybiidae

Swimmer Crabs/Simkrabbor



Identification

- Body shape crablike.
- End of fifth leg pair paddle-shaped.
- Carapace wider than long.

Potential misidentifications

- May look like other crabs but no other crabs has the paddle shaped fifth pair of legs.

Habitat

- Marine.
- Intertidal to around 100 m depth.
- Soft and hard bottoms.

Cephalothorax width Up to 80 mm



Hyas sp. *Hyas/Hyas*



Identification

- Body shape crablike.
- Carapace pear shaped.
- Carapace has bumps but no spines.
- Relatively long legs.
- No similar species in Sweden.

Potential misidentifications

- Carapace looks like Inachidae (Arthropod nr. 42) but *Hyas* is larger and with much shorter legs.

Habitat

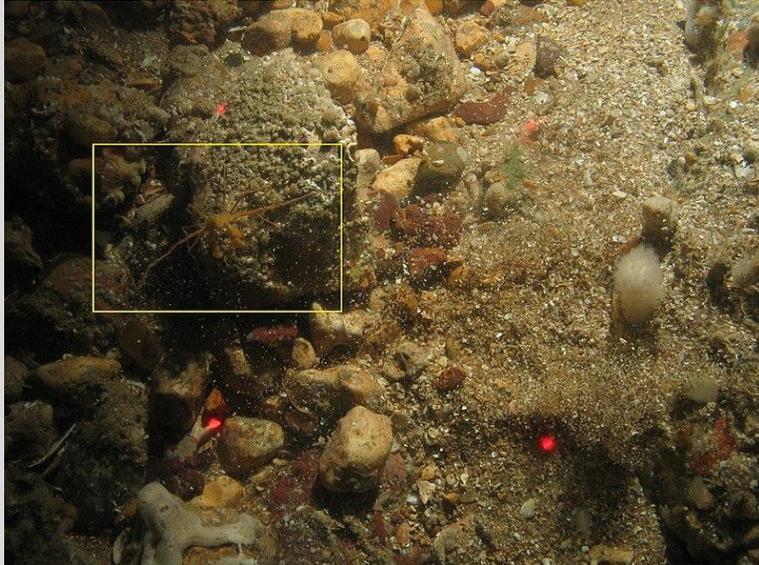
- Marine.
- All bottom types.
- 1-500 m depth.

Cephalothorax width	Up to 90 mm
Cephalothorax length	Up to 115 mm



Inachidae

Inachidae/Spindelkrabbor



Identification

- Body shape crablike.
- Carapace +/- pear shaped.
- Thin, very long legs.
- Relatively slender claws.
- Often covered by attached algae or animals.

Potential misidentifications

- Carapace looks like *Hyas* (Arthropod nr. 41) but *Hyas* is larger and with much shorter legs.

Habitat

- Marine.
- All bottom types.
- 1-200 m depth.

Cephalothorax length Up to 30 mm



Cancer pagurus
Edible crab/Krabbtaska



Identification

- Body shape crablike.
- Carapace (“shell”) is brown-red dorsally and yellow-white ventrally.
- Carapace is wider than long (>3/2).

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- Marine.
- Hard bottoms, soft bottoms.
- Down to 50 m depth.

Cephalothorax width Up to 300 mm



Carcinus maenas Green shore crab/Strandkrabba



Identification

- Body shape crablike.
- Carapace greenish or brownish with darker markings.
- Carapace somewhat “triangular”
- Moderate sized claws.

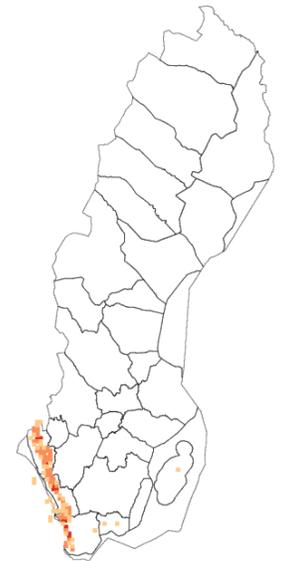
Potential misidentifications

- Can be mistaken for two rarer species. *Atelecyclus rotundatus* has rounder carapace and larger claws. *Pirimela denticulata* has smaller claws and is much smaller (carapace length <15 mm).

Habitat

- Marine.
- Soft and hard bottoms.
- From shallow waters down to 200 m.

Cephalothorax width	Up to 80 mm
Cephalothorax length	Up to 60 mm



Eriocheir sinensis

Chinese mitten crab/Kinesisk ullhandskrabba

NE



Identification

- Body shape crablike.
- Claws covered in fine brown hairs.
- Carapace almost round, somewhat longer than wide.

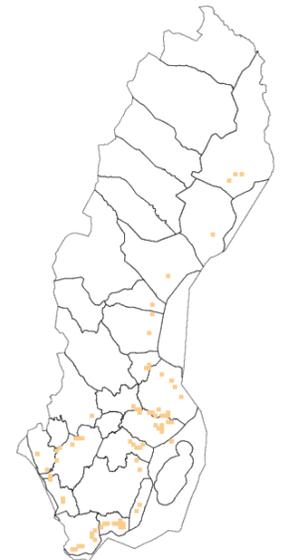
Potential misidentifications

- Can be mistaken for *Hemigrapsus* (Arthropod nr. 46) but *Hemigrapsus* has a more square carapace, lacks hair on claws is never seen in freshwater and is smaller.

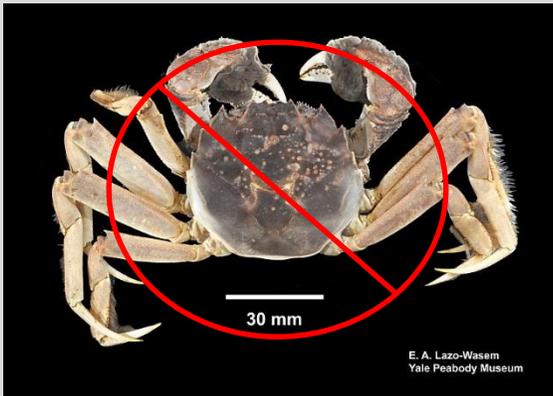
Habitat

- Freshwater and brackish water.
- Reproduces in marine environment.
- Introduced and invasive.

Cephalothorax length 60 – 70 mm



Hemigrapsus sp. *Hemigrapsus/Hemigrapsus*



Identification

- Carapace somewhat squarish.
- Carapace usually somewhat wider than long.
- Ridges on carapace forms an H-shape.

Potential misidentifications

- Can be mistaken for Chinese mitten crab (Arthropod nr. 45) but that species has hairy claws, has a rounder carapace and is never seen in truly marine environments.

Habitat

- Brackish and marine water.
- Intertidal to 15 m depth.
- Introduced and invasive.

Cephalothorax length Up to 40 mm



Sources

Species selected and text written by Christina Jönander, Oskar Gran and Søren Faurby.

Species characteristics are mainly based on Fältfauna Kräftdjur (Pehr H. Enckell, Signum, Lund, 1980), Fältnyckeln Mångfotingar (Artdatabanken, SLU, Uppsala, 2006) and artfakta.se

Distributional maps for all taxa taken from artfakta.se

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