

SCUDS (Freshwater Shrimp)



SCUDS – THE LOWER ONE IS INFECTED BY A PARASITE



RECENTLY MOULTED SCUD

Scuds are small crustaceans, and are relatives of crayfish & saltwater shrimp. They are considered by many to be the second most important food source to trout that reside in stillwaters (chironomids are often considered the most important).

Species:

There are two main species of scuds that British Columbia Interior fly fishers need to consider. These are the *Gammarus* and the *Hyaella*. The smaller *Hyaella* is the more widespread of the two species.

Description:

Scuds can be found in a wide array of colours. The most common colours are olive green, light brown and light olive-yellow. They have tapered bodies, with the heads and the tails being thinner than the middle of the body. When “pregnant”, females will carry a bright orange egg sac on their underbodies. Several scuds, can often be infected by a parasite called *Acanthocephalon*, which appears as a small orange dot on their backs. These infected scuds are often mistaken for pregnant females. Scuds have a segmented exoskeleton & have 7 pairs of legs and gills on their undersides. The *Hyaella* are the smaller of the two species, with adults averaging about 4 to 6 millimeters in length. Their *Gammarus* cousins will reach an average adult length of about 12 millimeters, though some may grow to as much as 18 millimeters length. As scuds grow, they need to shed their exoskeletons, and often take on a bluish-grey colour immediately after moulting. When resting, scuds will be curled up; however, their bodies extend (and straighten out) while swimming.

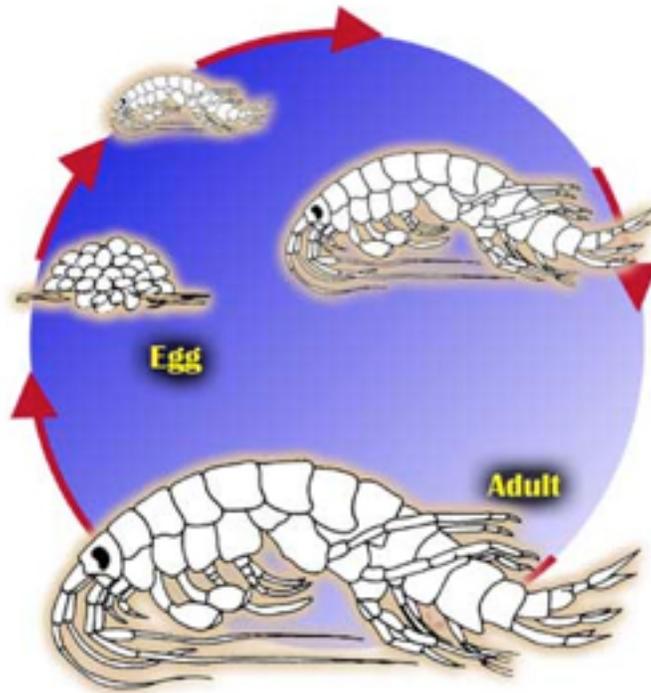
Preferred Habitat:

Gammarus scuds are more prevalent in calcium-rich waters, as their exoskeletons are composed mainly of calcium. *Hyaella* scuds are better suited to more acidic waters – one of the primary reasons that they are more widespread. Though most prefer shallow water, scuds can be found in depths of more than 15 meters. Scuds are light-sensitive creatures that prefer to hide among weed beds, under rocks or in the case of the *Hyaella* – in the marl (fine grey mud) at the bottom of the lake.

Seasonal Availability:

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Life Cycle:



Scuds do not really progress through stages. The females lay their eggs by releasing their egg pouch, and when the offspring hatch, they closely resemble adults (but are extremely small). A single pair of scuds may produce 20 000 offspring in one year.

Scuds and the Food Chain:

Scuds are omnivores feeding on various aquatic plants as well as aquatic invertebrates. As mentioned earlier, they are a staple of the stillwater trout's diet. In some cases, where a lake has suffered winterkill (where the trout in a lake have died over the winter due to a lack of oxygen) scuds can be witnessed swimming freely throughout the water.

