

MOLLUSKS AND CRUSTACEANS

HAY'S SPRING AMPHIPOD

ABOUT

The Hay's Spring Amphipod is a tiny aquatic crustacean with both swimming feet and jumping feet. This shrimp-like, colorless freshwater crustacean is 10 millimeters (.39 inches) in length with a flat body and no eyes. It is a detritivore, which means that it feeds on organic debris from decomposing plants, animals, and fecal material. Little is known about its reproductive cycle. The habitat of Hay's Spring Amphipod is a ground water outlet that feeds into a low gradient creek; it is hard to know more about the habitat of this creature because it is so inaccessible.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hay's Spring Amphipod is only known to exist in one population inhabiting an underground aquifer in an urban area. The animal has been collected for studies from a single spring at the south end of National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C. and from four other locations close by in Rock Creek Park, neighboring the National Zoo. The portion of the spring inhabited by this species is less than a 3.28 feet (1 meter) wide. The small size of their habitat makes this species extremely vulnerable to any construction activities or other human or natural disturbance. The actual size of this population is unknown, but no more than ten individuals have been seen at one time. There are a large number of threats to the survival of this rare and endangered crustacean, including pollution or disruption of their habitat, or anything that will adversely affect the groundwater. In the past there was over collection of this animal for scientific purposes.

For more detailed information visit: www.ecos.fws.gov.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Where is the only place in the world you can find Hay's Spring Amphipod?

- a) St. Louis, MO
- b) Washington State
- c) Washington, DC
- d) Central Park, NYC

Answer is C.

