



MOLLUSKS AND CRUSTACEANS

KENK'S AMPHIPOD

ABOUT

Kenk's Amphipod (*Stygobromus kenki*) is a tiny shrimp-like freshwater crustacean. Unlike its larger relatives, the lobster and regular shrimp, its outer shell is soft. It may grow to a quarter inch in length. It is found mostly underground and because of that has no eyes and is totally lacking in color. Little is known about the species due to the inaccessibility of its habitat and the fact that it is rarely found on the surface. However, it is believed by biologists to eat bacteria and fungi found on dead and decaying leaves. The name Amphipod or Amphipoda is derived from Latin and means "different feet". This refers to this creature's many types of legs – some they use for eating and others for swimming. Kenk's Amphipod is only found in dead leaves and fine soils where underground water comes to the surface, known as spring-seep outflows.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dr. Roman Kenk discovered this species of amphipod in 1967, which is how it got its name. This crustacean is only found in five sites in Washington, DC and Montgomery County, MD. Three of the Rock Creek Sites in the District of Columbia are in Rock Creek Park, which is managed by the National Park Service. It is amazing that they have survived in such a heavily developed area, and their presence in the five sites indicates good water quality. Because of the limited sites of the Kenk's Amphipod's habitat, this tiny animal is extremely vulnerable and the main threats to this minute crustacean are changes in water quality and quantity. Toxic spills, sewer leaks, and pollutants from surrounding development or any major changes in levels of water flow from extreme weather could destroy this very rare animal. Several organizations are coming together and working hard to keep this amphipod's habitat pristine and the groundwater pure.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

What does the Latin word Amphipoda mean?

- a) Different feet
- b) Lacking in color
- c) Without eyes
- d) Many legs



Answer is A.