

# Macroinvertebrate Fact File 6



## Freshwater Shrimp - sensitivity scale 3

- New Zealand has only a single species of decapod (ten-legged) shrimp in the whole country.
- They are usually found amongst vegetation in lowland streams.
- They can reasonably survive up to around 50% seawater strength. Normal seawater is 3.5% salt.
- They move by flapping fin-like structures under the tail when the water is moving slowly. When the water is moving quickly they walk along gripping objects with the pincers on their walking legs.
- Freshwater shrimp are detritivores feeding on detritus, algal films, wood and bacteria. These are scraped off and picked up by the two pairs of pincers held out front. Larger particles are cut up by the mouthparts.
- All shrimp go through a male phase before turning into adult female forms.
- The eggs of the female (around 2000) are carried under the tail until hatching where the young are then released to float downstream in the current to the sea to develop.
- The baby shrimp migrate upstream around late Summer/Autumn.
- All freshwater shrimp moult their exoskeletons every few months as they grow older and their old exoskeletons become too small.



Image courtesy of Otago Regional Council

**Freshwater Shrimp**

## Freshwater Bug Fact File 6

Collect the fact files, laminate them and put them on to a key ring to produce a macroinvertebrate reference guide.