

# ○ New England Marine Invader ID Card Amphipods and Shrimp



Gretchen Carlson

*Caprella mutica*  
Japanese Skeleton Shrimp

- Mottled red body with a ridge of small spines along back
- Males can be over 2 inches long, first two body segments are smooth and very long, giving the appearance of a long bent neck
- Females are smaller with a brood pouch with red spots
- Native to the north Pacific coasts of Asia, now common throughout New England, especially on docks and pilings



Andrew Martinez

Skeleton shrimp are a large family of caprellid amphipods with a long body, large front claws, long antennae, and hind legs that cling to surfaces (see photo above of *C. mutica* clinging to a colonial tunicate). Caprellids are often highly animated and can be seen “waving” back and forth in large groups.



Adrienne Pappal

*Palaemon elegans*  
European Rock Shrimp

- Mostly translucent body with dark red-brown bands, neon blue claws, and orange/blue bands on legs
- Can be up to 2.5 inches long
- Distinct, shovel-shaped rostrum has 7 to 9 teeth across the top
- Occurs near docks, in tide pools, and in salt marsh creeks
- Found from Connecticut to Maine, range is expanding



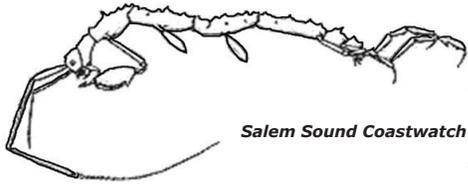
Arjan Gittenberger

First observed in New England in 2010, *P. elegans* belongs to the grass shrimp family, which includes both native and non-native species. The body includes a long pair of antennae, a serrated rostrum, and five pairs of legs. The first two pairs of legs have small, slender claws.

# Similar Species

## Family Caprellidae Skeleton Shrimp

- *Aeginina longicornis* (illustration below) is the only species with males as big as *C. mutica*, but the first two body segments of *A. longicornis* are much smaller and spines are present along the entire back



Salem Sound Coastwatch

- *Caprella penantis* (photo below) is much smaller than *C. mutica*, has short body segments like *A. longicornis* but with no spines along the back



Agnes Mittermayr



Adrienne Pappal

### *Palaemon* spp. Grass Shrimp

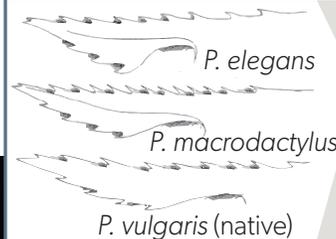
- Transparent with muted coloration and banding
- New England species include *P. pugio*, *P. vulgaris*, and *P. intermedius*



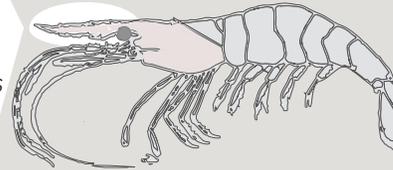
Cristina Kennedy

### *Palaemon macrodactylus* Asian Shrimp (non-native)

- Dark, muted body color with reddish spots and orange-beige bands on claws and legs
- Can have a whitish stripe along the back
- Usually 10 to 13 teeth across top of rostrum with



### Rostrum Identification



The shape of the rostrum and arrangement of teeth along it may help to distinguish palaemonid shrimp species in the field, particularly for large individuals. A microscope may be needed for definitive ID.

- double rows of setae (fine hairs) along bottom
- Native to the Northwest Pacific, first observed in Long Island Sound in 2001, now found north to New Hampshire
- Difficult to tell apart from native shrimp in the field

Species are native unless otherwise noted.