

Porcellio scaber Latreille, 1804

The terrestrial crustacean *Porcellio scaber* inhabits litter stratum in forests; it also inhabits middens, gardens, and cellars in human habitations, preferring moist microclimates (Wang & Schreiber 1999).

Commonly referred to as 'woodlouse', *P. scaber* is an abundant inhabitant of litter stratum in western and central European forests. Descended from subspecies *Porcellio scaber lusitanus* Verhoeff, 1907, which is endemic in the Atlantic regions of the Iberian Peninsula, *P. scaber* has spread through distribution of forest litter and through human habitation eastwards to Poland and the Baltic states. It has also spread to sites in Greenland and North America.

P. scaber was first recorded on the sub-Antarctic Marion Island during a survey in April 2001. Searches conducted between September 2001 and April 2002 yielded as many as 391 specimens including gravid females. It is likely to have been introduced with building supplies from Cape Town or from Gough Island (Slabber & Chown 2002).

P. scaber has an island wide range on Gough Island and introduced invertebrates form a large proportion of the invertebrate community. Introduced detritivores on Gough like *P. scaber*, lumbricid worms, and the millipede *Cylindroiulus latestriatus* can have long term effects on nutrient cycles of its peaty soils that lack such species and have formed in the absence of rapid organic breakdown. Long term effects can include changes in flora and faunal communities (Jones *et al.* 2003).

There are concerns that *P. scaber* may have an impact on native



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invertebrates. For example, Gough Island's only indigenous terrestrial isopod *Styloniscus australis* is rare in lowland habitats where the introduced terrestrial isopod *P. scaber* is abundant; however it is abundant on upland sites where *P. scaber* is rare. *P. scaber* may also compete with primary native detritivores on Marion Island such as *Pringleophaga marioni* and earthworms (Jones *et al.* 2003).

References:

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