

# Megacyclops gigas (Claus 1857)

Family Cyclopidae, G.O. Sars

Genus Megacyclops, Kiefer 1927

## Key characteristics:

*M. gigas* is the largest among the cyclopoid copepod species in Norway. Though species within the genus *Cyclops* may be of nearly the same size (i.e. *C. insignis*), the body of *M. gigas* is more robust. P5 (last pair of leg) are very characteristic in *Megacyclops* sp. *M. gigas* is distinguished from *M. viridis* by the length of the inner seta of the furca, which in *M. gigas* is less than twice as long as the outer one. The inner seta is comparatively larger in *M. viridis*. The furca of *M. gigas* is longer than in *M. viridis*. Its colour is of light yellowish brown with a more or less distinct olivaceous or greenish tinge.

Female: Length 2.2-2.8 mm

Male: Length 2.0-2.5 mm

## Distribution:

*M. gigas* is a common littoral copepod found in 13.3% (288 loc.) of the water bodies. It is found in all parts of the country, and occurs from sea level to 1371 m a.s.l., with its highest frequency (>20%) above 1000 m a.s.l. Though it occurs in water bodies of all sizes, it is most common in ponds with a surface area <0.1 da. When pH>5, the frequency of water bodies containing *M. gigas* is relatively constant. Below this value there are few records. The content of electrolytes does not seem to affect the species, which is found with its highest frequency in both ends of the electrolyte gradient.

