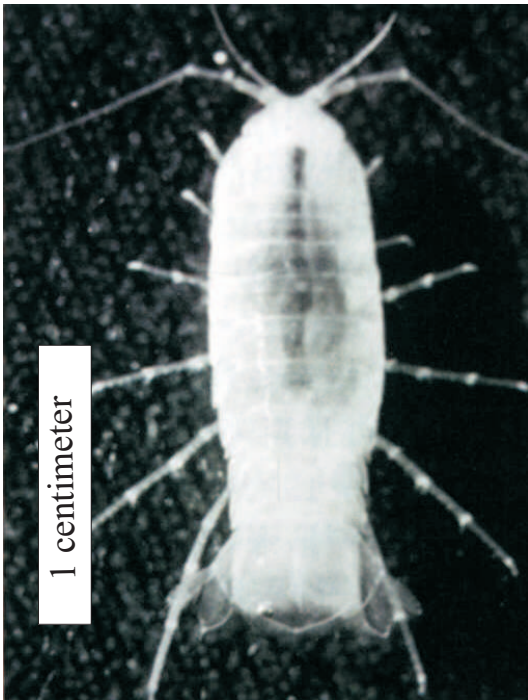


# The Madison Cave Isopod (*Antrolana lira*)



- A blind, free-swimming crustacean known only from the limestone aquifers of the Great Valley of Virginia and West Virginia
- Blind and pigmentless, fully adapted to life underground and underwater
- Lives in flooded cave passages beneath the valley floor
- The only known member of the genus *Antrolana*, its closest relatives are marine species and groundwater cirrolanid isopods from Texas and Mexico.
- Believed to have evolved long ago from marine ancestors stranded when ocean water was in contact with limestone of the Shenandoah Valley
- Range extends from Lexington, VA to Leetown, WV
- Known from only 12 sites, 10 of which are in the Shenandoah River Watershed, 8 in the South Fork Shenandoah Watershed
- Known from 11 caves and 7 wells
- Genetic studies at American University have shown the species includes at least three unique populations, isolated for millions of years.
- Listed as **threatened over its entire range** under the US and Virginia Endangered Species Acts, the Madison Cave Isopod is legally protected from impacts due to human activities.
- Protecting its habitat also protects groundwater that humans depend upon.

