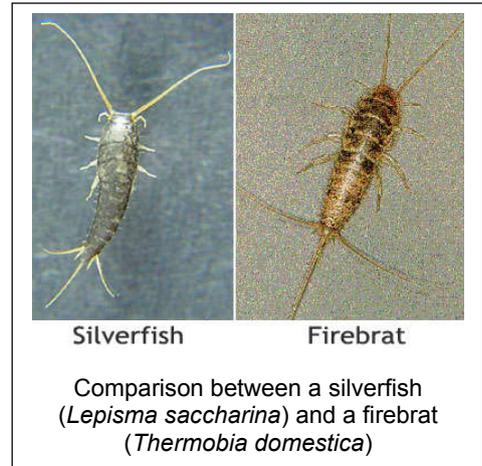


SILVERFISH

Biology

Silverfish (*Lepisma saccharina*) are primitive insects, about 12mm long when fully grown and covered in silvery-grey scales. They have two antennae about two-thirds the length of the body and three long processes from the end of the abdomen. The females lay around 100 eggs over her lifetime, which take approximately a month to hatch. The nymphs hatch and take around 3 months to reach adulthood. Adults can live for 3½ years.

They are similar in appearance to **firebrats** (*Thermobia domestica*), which are a different colour and tend to inhabit warmer areas such as bakeries and kitchens.



Pest Status

- Silverfish are commonly found in food cupboards.
- They are nuisance pests and only build up to high numbers in areas of high humidity.
- The optimum conditions for their development are temperatures of 22-27°C and 75-97% relative humidity.
- Silverfish feed on carbohydrate material such as paper, flour or even the glue on cardboard food packets.
- Damage can occur to items eaten, but often this is often negligible compared to the damage caused by damp.
- **Silverfish are completely harmless to humans and do not bite.**

Treatment

Silverfish are nocturnal, so problems may go unnoticed for long periods. Prevention is usually better than treating with insecticides, as this will only ever provide a short-term solution to the underlying damp problem. Look carefully at the location where the problem is occurring to identify where conditions of high humidity might build up. An open window or a de-humidifier may then be able to solve the problem more permanently.

Treatment, if required, would firstly require the removal of any infested items, such as food packets, books or wallpaper. A residual insecticide can then be applied to cracks, crevices, floorboards and skirting boards.

