



400-million-year-old insect plaguing Irish homes

Ireland | January 29, 2021

Rentokil, an Irish pest control company, has reported a major increase in the report of silverfish infestations in Ireland. They believe it has been the cold winter conditions that are bringing silverfish into Irish homes.

Silverfish are small insects, about one centimeter long, these creatures about 400 million years old. An infestation can mean damage to books, photographs, paintings, plaster, and other household items as these insects feed on starch and cellulose. They also feed on human skin and hair. These creatures are silver in color, teardrop-shaped, with tiny scales and antennae. A single silverfish can lay up to 60 eggs per day. Most commonly silverfish are found in bathrooms or dark, damp and humid rooms.

The pest control company, Rentokil, has reported a 32% increase in silverfish call-outs during the period of November and December 2020, compared to the previous year. Most call-outs have been to Dublin, followed by Kildare, Limerick, and Cork.

Two year ago Rentokil had also reported a massive increase in silverfish infestations. At the time, Colm Moore, Area Technical Manager for Rentokil told [Joe](#): “Silverfish (and firebrats) are believed to be one of the most primitive of living insect orders in the world. They are carrot shape in profile and possess long tail-like appendages from the tip of their abdomen and their bodies are nearly always covered in scales (almost like plate armor). Silverfish consume a wide range of food types e.g. oats, beef, paper, textiles etc. They are long-lived and can live up to about three years and possibly even longer.

“Some species can also survive long periods of starvation e.g. one individual has been recorded surviving as long as 300 days without feeding. They require damp and humid conditions and thrive in kitchens, laundry rooms, bathrooms, and other dark, isolated areas. Fixing leaks in pipework, improving ventilation, and using dehumidifiers can help discourage silverfish. They can be found in a variety of common items in households and businesses such as books, wallpaper, paintings, fabrics, carpets, coffee, sugar, pasta, and other food debris.

“In small numbers, silverfish are not really a problem and you can easily get rid of them, but a large infestation can be a serious issue for your home or business.”