

YOUR GUIDE TO POND DIPPING

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

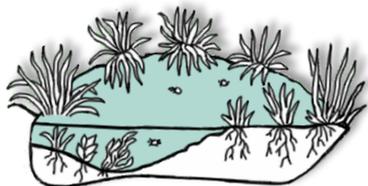
- A net (you can make one with a piece of wire and the foot of a pair of tights)
 - Jam jars
- Flat inspection trays (old lunch boxes – white is best)
- A hand lens or magnifying glass (if you can find one)

WHAT TO WEAR

Wellington boots or old shoes with non-slip soles.

WHERE

Find a small pond (it does not need to be big or deep – you will still find plenty of life there). Always go pond dipping with an adult.



WHEN

You can collect from ponds all the year round but be very careful when there is ice covering the pond. Morning and early afternoon are probably the best times for pond dipping as the small creatures are more active in the warmth of the sun. There will also be plenty of light for you to study them.

1. Approach your pond very quietly and slowly. You never know what animal life might be visible at the waters edge. There could be a fox or stoat drinking or a heron fishing.

2. As you get nearer the edge of the pond, look for the tracks of birds or animals on the muddy shore.

Go very slowly as you near the water itself so you do not frighten away tadpoles, beetles and small fish from the shallow water.

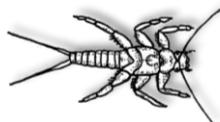
3. Select one area of the pond to dip and try not to disturb too much of the surrounding vegetation.

4. Put enough pond water into your tray for animals to move around in. Then sweep your net across the pond and empty it into the flat tray.



5. If you have a few flat trays, you can put different animals in different trays. Just don't leave the trays in the hot sun!

6. As you dip you will find that the different animals you find live in different parts of the pond: pond skaters can be found on the surface; mosquito larvae and water beetles hanging below the surface; pond snails can be found on the pond weed and caddisflies and dragonfly nymphs on the pond floor.



7. When you have finished looking at them, always remember to put the animals back into the pond.

8. Take great care when near water. Do not go alone and always tell someone where you are going!

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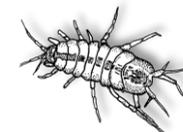
AQUATIC MACRO INVERTEBRATES



Aquatic
=
Water



Macro
=
Things you can
see by eye



Invertebrates
=
Animals without
a backbone

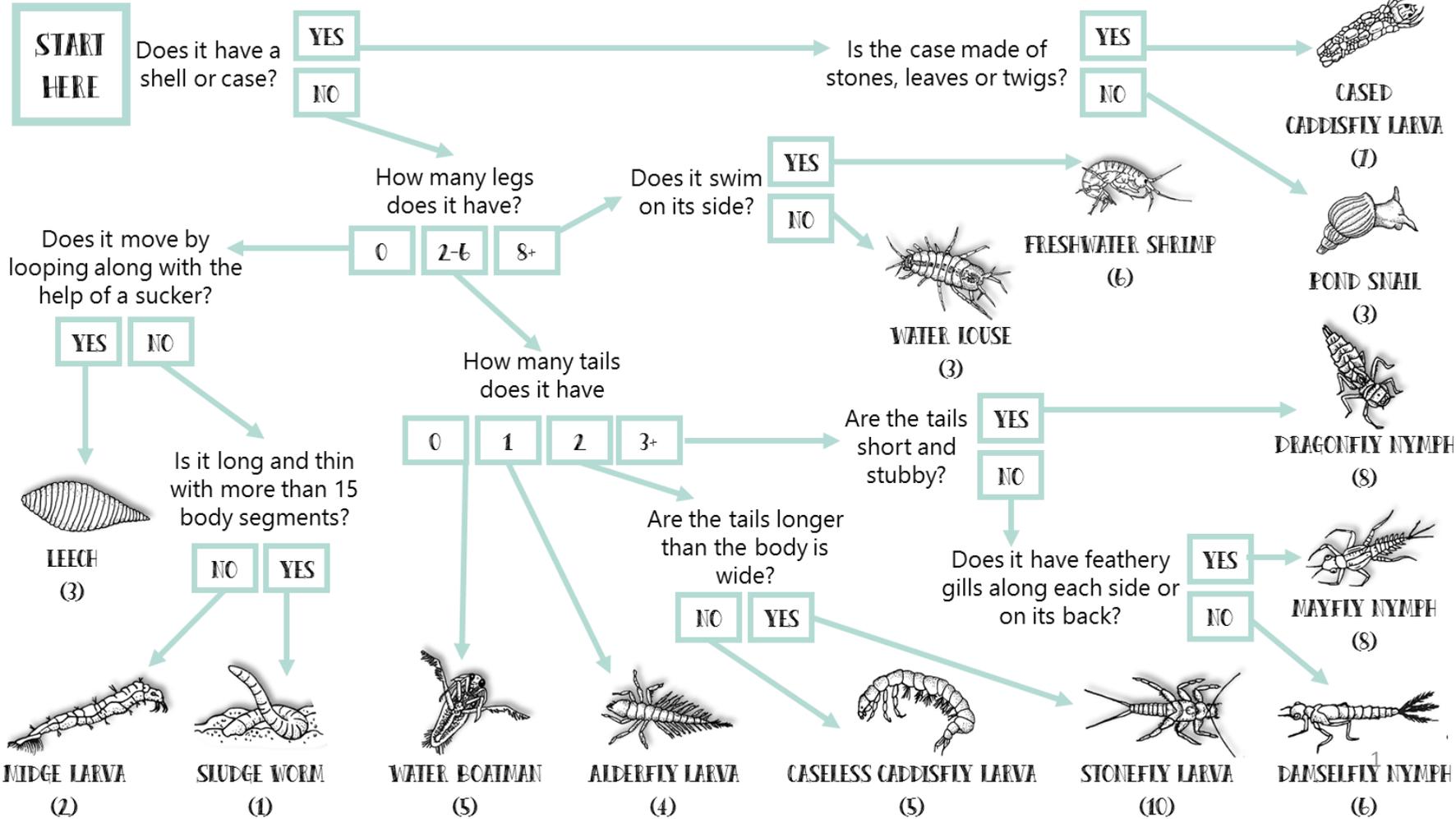
RIVER BEASTIES IDENTIFICATION KEY

CLOSE-UP ON INVERTEBRATES

Use your new skills to find out which animal is shown in close up below!



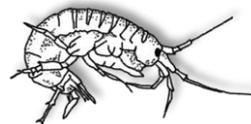
Photo: Alex Seerney



HOW CLEAN IS YOUR RIVER?

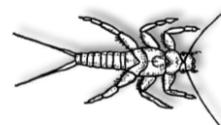
Discover how clean your river is by calculating the average score for the invertebrates you find.

- 1 to 3 Poor water quality
- 4 to 5 Good water quality
- 6 to 7 Excellent water quality



FRESHWATER SHRIMP

"An invertebrate is an animal without a backbone – like me!"



STONEFLY LARVA

"Some invertebrates, like me, cannot survive in polluted waters so have a high score of 10. Can you spot my high-scoring friends?"



SLUDGE WORM

"I can live in heavily polluted water with very little oxygen and so get a low score of 1"