

Can you identify these critters?

Email your answers to linda.kerrison@oart.org.uk

<p><u>Dragonfly Nymph</u> These fellas are big, stout & difficult to miss. They don't swim instead they crawl along the substrate or expel a jet of water from their bottoms to escape quickly. Their eyes are prominent and take up a large amount of the head. Identification to family & species is very difficult & involves looking at the mouth part/mask. They can be found in all types of waterbodies.</p>	<p><u>Freshwater Shrimp</u> Well it looks like a shrimp! They can swim upright or on their sides, their colour is usually brown/gray. Size is between 14 - 21mm. Although referred to as a shrimp they are in fact an amphipod. They are very important as they are a useful indicator of water quality, they require oxygen rich waters & are a staple food for fish, especially trout, bullhead and salmon parr.</p>	<p><u>Mayfly</u> Look for the 3 tail filaments, all mayflies have 3 tails but be careful they break very easily so can be difficult to spot. If you have 3 tails look next for the gills - down the side of the critter, these vary according to family and species but mayflies have gills. Another ID feature is the wing pads on its back and the jointed legs.</p>	<p><u>Hoglouse</u> This crustacean is related to the woodlouse and looks like one! They walk along the substrate and are poor swimmers. They can tolerate low levels of oxygen and therefore often found in stagnant water. The females lay eggs which they carry in brood pouches underneath their bodies. They feed on detritus and organic matter. They are common throughout the UK</p>	<p><u>Damselfly</u> These are narrow bodied, with large eyes, 6 thin legs and 3 paddle/leaf shaped, tail-like gills. They also have small wing buds on the back of the thorax. They vary in size depending on their age but can be anything from 6-65mm in length. They catch their prey by lying in wait, resting quietly on the substrate or in vegetation. Some species can spend as much as 5 years in water before emerging.</p>

<p><u>Flatworm</u> As the name suggests these are flat and worm-like. They move along the substrate in a smooth motion using cilia under the body. They are small, around 5mm. There are 18089 species of flatworms worldwide living in both the sea and freshwater. They are primitive animals but have a definite head & tail with a developed nervous system. They are believed to have been around for 520 million years!!</p>	<p><u>Cased Caddis Fly</u> This is a larvae that makes a case out of small stones, sand, leaves, vegetation which it glues together using silk. The material used, shape and neatness of the case helps identify the family. There is just one terrestrial caddis found in leaf litter and there are caseless caddis which don't make a transportable case. Cased caddis are a good indicator of water quality all preferring well oxygenated, clean water.</p>	<p><u>Leech</u> Very easily identified with their segmented bodies and suckers at each end, leeches are good swimmers and often patterned. They are very efficient hunters preying on other aquatic insects which they ingest through their anterior sucker. There are 4 main families of leech found in UK freshwater habitats, they are an indicator that water quality is relatively poor as they can survive in low levels of oxygen.</p>	<p><u>Mayfly</u> Although very different looking than number 3 - look at the tails, the gills and the wing pads and jointed legs. This is a more common mayfly, <i>Baetis</i>, it has a distinctive agile swimming action & known as a swimming mayfly. They range from 3 - 20mm in length, eat plants & algae & they are a very important food source for trout and grayling, the adult form is often copied by fly fishermen & known as Olives.</p>	<p><u>Ramshorn Snail</u> A flat snail that is found in a coiled shape. They graze on algae by scraping rocks with a special tongue which has embedded teeth, called a radula. The Little Whirlpool Ramshorn Snail - which is only found in Pulborough Brooks, Norfolk Broads & the Pevensey Levels is considered to be one of the UKs most vulnerable molluscs. This tiny snail measures <5mm in diameter, requires unpolluted, chalk waters with specific vegetation.</p>