

Exploring the Freshwater

There is a lot to see if you take the time and a bit of care, either watching from the bank or getting your wellies wet. Before you jump in however, remember the following rules:

- Water can be dangerous, check the depth and sediment before you go in and if the water is deep or fast flowing, or the substrate very soft then stay out.
- Don't go on your own.
- Anglers are important economically. Please respect their right to the water and don't go into fishing rivers. Stay to the small burns - you'll be likely to see more anyway - if an angler is present, please leave them in peace.
- You may see some animals, particularly fish, birds and mammals, by sitting quietly and watching. A pair of binoculars would be a good addition.
- Special equipment isn't needed, you can look with just hands and eyes but you'll see more if prepared with simple equipment.

Materials

Dip Net
Teaspoon
White tray or bucket

Methods

1. Turn stones and have a good look - you'll find invertebrates clinging to the stones or scuttling about on them. Remember to put it back in the same place when you've had a look. Keep turning.
2. Pond dipping - put a bit of water into your tray. Sweep your net through the water, preferably near weeds, a few times. Carefully rinse the inside of the net with the water in the tray. Look carefully and see if you have caught anything. Repeat as often as you want.
3. Kick-sampling - this needs a flow. Put a bit of water in your tray. Place your net in the water, pointing upstream. Stand just upstream of the open net and use your foot to disturb the sediment - any animals will be washed down into your net. Use your hand to carefully rinse the net in the tray water. Look carefully and see if you have caught anything. Repeat as often as you want.



Caseless caddis



Cased caddis
(a home built from gravel,
twigs and other debris)



Dragonfly
With its big jaws



Trout
(with its spots and red
adipose)



Salmon
(with its forked tail)



Freshwater shrimp
(with caseless caddis)



Mayfly
(with 3 tails)



Stonefly
(with 2 tails)



Eel