Key to Stream Macroinvertebrates

Izaak Walton League
Save Our Streams

Shells

Single

Gilled snail
Spiral, open on right

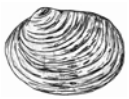
Lunged snail
Spiral, open on left

Orb Snail
Coiled

Double

Clam
Small, whitish tan or brown

Mussel
Large, dark-colored



No Shells

Legs

No Legs

Leech
Suckers, expands and contracts, soft, slimy body

Midge Fly
Distinct head, whitest to clear or red < ¼”

Aquatic Worm
Small, hair like or looks like earth worm

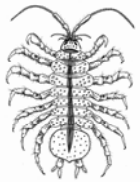
Black Fly
Black head, shaped like bowling pin, <1/4 “

Crane Fly
Plump, worm-like, often can see guts

10+ legs

Crayfish
Lobster-like

Sowbug
Two long antenna flatter top to bottom



Scud
Shrimp-like, swims on side

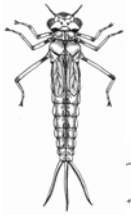
Water Snipe Fly
Many caterpillar like legs, two fringed tails

3 pairs of legs

3 tails

Mayfly
3 long tails gills on abdomen

Damselfly
3 oar-like “tails” no gills on abdomen



No Obvious Tails

Riffle Beetle

Larva - Brown, crunchy body, 6 legs, “C” shaped, no gills on belly

Adult - Small, dark crawls on bottom

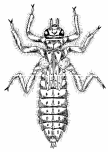
Water Penny
Flat, oval disk

Caddisfly
Green, tan , orange or white, may have gills on body

May be encased in a house of sticks, stone or leaves

Net Spinning Caddisfly
Dark head, tan , gills tufts on belly, 3 armored plates behind head

Dragonfly
Large eyes, stocky body, no tail



Dobsonfly
Large mouth, “spines” on side

Fishfly
8 pairs of spines, no gill tufts between spines

One or two tails

Alderfly
7 pairs of, “spines” on side, long thin tail

Stonefly
2 tails, gill tufts under arms

Mayfly
Two tails, gills on abdomen