

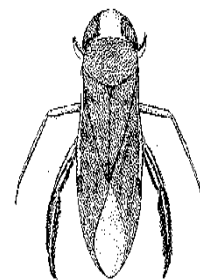
dipnetting identification

Water boatman

Habitat: Water boatman are found in still and slowly flowing pools. Typically they occur in shallower water among vegetation or on muddy bottoms and are rarely found away from the edges in large water bodies. Boatmen are amongst the most abundant of water bugs and are found throughout Australia and Tasmania.

Diet: Most water boatman are omnivorous eating small organic matter of either plant or animal origin but certain species prey upon small invertebrates such as fly larvae. When feeding they tend to forage on or near the bottom and therefore are only seen when they come up for air, breaking the surface with their head.

Behaviour: Adult water boatman are strong fliers and therefore it is not surprising that they are found throughout Australia. They are a favourite food of native fish.



Freshwater shrimp

Habitat: Freshwater shrimps live in the shallow waters of still or slow moving lowland rivers and streams and standing freshwaters. They are found in every state in Australia.

Diet: Freshwater shrimps feed on both animal and plant material scavenging for their food on the bottom of the water body. Shrimp make an important part of the food chain for fauna in streams

Behaviour: They tend to congregate under banks, large submerged boulders and stones and amongst aquatic vegetation. They swim slowly in quiet waters but when they flick their tail they shoot backwards very quickly. Breeding season occurs in spring and early summer. The females brood their black eggs under their tails, giving them a very dark like appearance and these are quite noticeable.

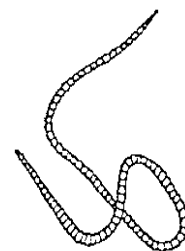


Aquatic earthworm

Habitat: Freshwater worms are found in virtually all water bodies.

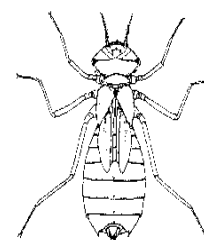
Diet: Freshwater worms feed on small pieces of dead and decomposing plants and animals. They are Detritivores.

Features: Freshwater worms are usually coloured red or brown; they have stiff needle like structures located on the top and bottom of each of the body segments.



Dragonfly nymph

Habitat: these are amongst the commonest insects seen around fresh water habitats. Dragonfly nymphs, or larvae, live under stones and amongst bark, branches and reeds in slow flowing pools and fast moving sections of streams. Dragonfly adults are swift fliers and feed on midges and other small insects which they capture during flight.



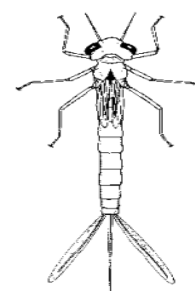
Diet: Dragonfly larvae feed on aquatic insects and crustaceans. They are predatory and a very efficient hunter. They have long folded back jaws that spring out and grab their victims.

Behaviour: Dragonfly larvae have a very special skill for swimming around creeks. They suck water into their stomach and then push it out their bottom, like a jet propulsion. They use this to get away from other animals bigger than them and to chase smaller animals. Eventually they climb up a plant and out of the water. They peel off their old skeleton to emerge as a winged dragonfly which hunts just as effectively over the surface of the pond.

Adult Dragonfly males live near water guarding their hunting and mating territory. They often have a favourite perch from which they can look over their territory.

Damselfly nymph

Habitat: Damselfly nymphs, or larvae, can be found in many different types of water bodies. Some live in slow rivers, swamps and creeks in and amongst reeds on the edges of the water, while others prefer very fast flowing streams and rivers. Here they cling to the rocks and stones on the bottom of the streams. They are almost never found in polluted waters.

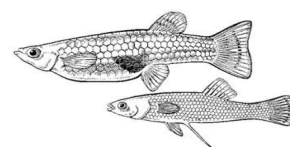


Diet: Damselfly larvae are carnivorous, they feed on small aquatic insects and crustaceans. They hunt by using patience and stealth, surprising their victims with a lower jaw that shoots out catching prey (this is called the Labium).

Behaviour: Damselfly larvae are not active animals, they move slowly and deliberately. Most climb or crawl amongst or over submerged plants, rocks or leaf litter. They live in their larvae form for around a year (although some can stay as larvae for at least 3 years) before climbing out of the water, growing out of their skeleton and turning into an adult. Damselflies are more leisurely fliers than Dragonflies and when they rest they fold their wings over their back, this is how we identify them from dragonflies. They have powerful biting parts which they use to hunt with when flying.

Mosquito fish

Features: Mosquito fish are feral fish that have been introduced into Australia. They were introduced to Australia from America in 1920 to control mosquitos, but native fish are actually much better at this. They are now the most common freshwater fish in the world.



Mosquito fish are aggressive predators. They will attack, kill and eat native fish, frogs and water bugs. They compete for food with native fish, eat their eggs and attack and kill the baby fish (fry). Therefore where mosquito fish live you don't find many native fish. Mosquito fish eat frog eggs as well as attacking tadpoles by nipping their tails, often killing the tadpoles. They also eat any water bug they can catch.

These creatures represent only some of the many invertebrates commonly netted in Centennial Park's ponds. Rangers will provide further information and identification during your excursion.