

Pond Life Field Guide

Pre-Activity

Program at Nature Station: Pond Prowl

Grade level: 3-6

Program length: 70-90 minutes

Prep time: 10-20 minutes

Activity time: 30-40 minutes

Presentation time: 30 minutes

Group size: Eight groups of 2-4 students

Setting: Classroom or computer lab if possible

Vocabulary and Concepts:

Adaptation- an inherited characteristic that aids in an animal's survival

Aquatic- referring to water

Aquatic organism- an animal or plant that spends all or part of its life cycle in water

Community- a group of organisms living together in one place

Habitat- the place where an animal lives and gets the food, air, water, and shelter to survive

Invertebrate- an animal without a backbone

Larva/nymph- the youngest/first stage in the life cycle of an animal that goes through metamorphosis

Organism- any living thing

Pond- a body of water smaller than a lake

Wetland- an area covered with water at least part of the year

Materials:

One blank field guide page (provided below) for each group

Computers with Internet access or printed fact sheets (links provided below)

Pencils

Crayons/markers (optional)

Procedure: In order to introduce your students to some of the more unfamiliar organisms they

will encounter at the pond, split your class into eight groups and have each group research one of the following invertebrates:

- damselfly
- dragonfly
- mosquito
- stonefly
- water boatman
- water scorpion
- water strider
- whirligig beetle

Option #1: If you choose to have your students do Internet research, this website will be very helpful:

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/>

Click on the link “Stuff on Bugs” on the right side of the page.
Then click on “Buglopedia” at the bottom of the next page.

Option #2: If the students will not have Internet access, pull up these websites beforehand and print a fact sheet for each organism to be distributed to the groups.

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/water-strider.pdf>

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/water-scorpion.pdf>

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/freshwater-yabby.pdf> (whirligig beetle)

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/stonefly-nymph.pdf>

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/dragonfly-nymph.pdf>

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/damselfly-nymph.pdf>

<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/waterboatmen.pdf>

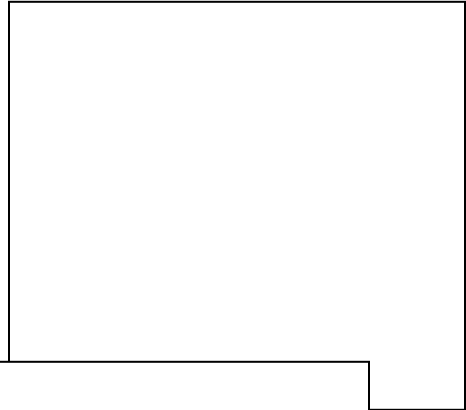
<http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/html/popups/pdfs/fact30.pdf> (mosquito)

Then, have each group fill out a field guide page (provided below) for their organism and present it to the rest of the class. After the students' presentations, copies of their field guide pages can be made and distributed so that each student can compile their own field guide to bring on the field trip.

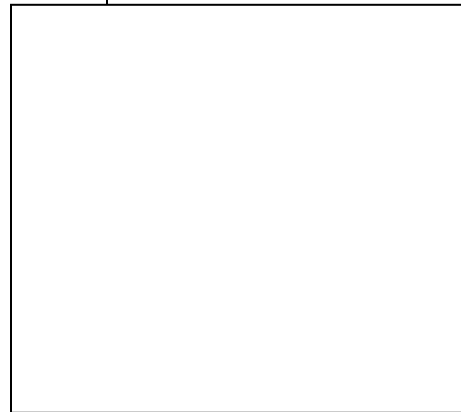
Pond Organisms Field Guide Page

Name of organism _____

What does it look like when it is young?
(Draw a picture)



What does it look like as an adult?
(Draw a picture)



Is the baby (larva/nymph) bigger or smaller than a penny? _____

Is the adult bigger or smaller than a penny? _____

Can the adult fly? _____

What does this organism like to eat? _____

Is it an herbivore, carnivore, or omnivore? _____

Name two traits on its body to help you identify it...

...as a larva _____

...and as an adult _____