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A Guide To Common Freshwater Invertebrates Of North America



Synopsis

Popular interest in the observation and study of freshwater invertebrates is increasing. This book meets the needs of this growing audience of naturalists, environmentalists, anglers, teachers, students, and others by providing substantive information in easy-to-understand, non-technical language for many groups of invertebrates commonly found in the streams, lakes, ponds, and other freshwater environments of North America. Section One provides background information on the biology and ecology of freshwater organisms and environments and explains why and how invertebrates can be studied, simply and without complex equipment, in the field and the laboratory. Section Two describes nearly 100 of the most common groups of invertebrates, and for each group a whole-body colour illustration is provided along with brief text pointing out the most important features that identify members of the group. Section Three contains in-depth descriptions of the life history, behaviour, and ecology of the various invertebrate groups, and explains their important ecological contributions and relationships to humans. The Guide is broad in scope, geographically and taxonomically, and it is written at a substantive yet easily accessible level that will appeal to both novices and those with more advanced knowledge of the subject. It also contains more than 100 specially commissioned colour illustrations by the well-known scientific illustrator Amy Bartlett Wright that will greatly facilitate the easy and rapid identification of specimens.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This book is an excellent introduction to the diversity of invertebrates found in the lakes and

streams of North America. It is well written and easy to follow for novices and more experienced investigators of these animals. It is intended for a wide audience and includes helpful information for middle and high school students and teachers, as well as local citizens engaged in stream monitoring or other projects investigating their local watersheds. It will also be useful for college-level courses that involve aquatic ecosystems but do not focus specifically on aquatic invertebrates. Additional readers are likely to include anglers and other naturalists interested in learning more about life below the water's surface." --- American Entomologist, Summer 2004"Any naturalist who works with freshwater environments will want a copy of this book as a valued reference. It provides an amazing and comprehensive summary of the most common aquatic invertebrates." --- Ohio Dragon Flier, September 2002"[Voshell's book is] much more than the typical field guides on the market today.... A comprehensive guide and study tool, it is part field guide and part biology text, the combination of which is what makes this book unique and valuable.... As complete a guide book as you will ever find or need." --- Ecobeetle Book Reviews, August 8, 2002

Dr J Reese Voshell has taught in the Department of Entomology at Virginia Tech since 1976. He has received numerous research grants to study the effects of pollution and environmental stress on freshwater invertebrates, and has been named to the university's Academy of Teaching Excellence. His 30 years of teaching, outreach, and research have convinced him that people of all ages, educational backgrounds, and personal interests can become fascinated with freshwater invertebrates.

What a World! Water a World! and BETTER WORLD BOOKS has done it again: a splendid "WITHDRAWN" copy of just the book I need to help me with my own NaNoWriMo manuscript on life in freshwater creeks! The 450pp. book, ziplocked in poly, will fit in the large cargo pocket of my old ripstop poplin, Vietnam-era tropical fatigues; the cover and binding are sturdy and well-preserved (WHY BUY NEW when you can buy from /BetterWorld?); the J. Reese Voshell, Jr. text is clear and well-spaced with ample margins where muddy thumbs shall tread; the Amy Bartlett Wright illustrations on clossy stock in (water!)COLORs are fantastic. ****ALL THAT said, the book I will forever use and recommend MORE highly is the smaller, better-illustrated, eminently-readable and thoroughly enjoyable New FieldBook of Freshwater Life by Elsie Klots! "A Putnam Nature Field Book, Elsie Klots' book of freshwater life is presented as "the most comprehensive guide to the recognition and study of the aquatic plants and animals of North America north of Mexico.""

Microscopic organisms, liverworts and mosses, the higher plants, sponges, hydras and jellyfish, moss animalcules, worms, crayfish and shrimp, spiders and mites, insects, snails, limpets and mussels, lampreys and fishes, salamanders, frogs and toads, turtles, snakes and alligators are studied by classification in turn, subdivided into groupings by families. Characteristics are given and behavior (locomotion, respiration, food-getting and reproduction) where applicable is described. Appendices inform as to collecting equipment, the preservation of specimens, and provide keys to the genera of frequently collected insects." (KIRKUS)...I own several good copies of the venerable KLOTS; let me know if you need.

I'm a high school teacher working with three students on a stream water testing project. We use this book to identify and classify macro invertebrates that we catch. It is very helpful.

This book is an excellent guide to family-level invertebrate identification. It has wonderful pictures and excellent background information on the organisms. Section I has the fundamentals of freshwater invertebrate biology. It discusses basic ecology of invertebrates and provides generalized information about habitat, feeding, movement, breathing, and stress tolerance. This section also discusses common methods of studying freshwater invertebrates and provides references for further study. Section II has an identification mechanism for identifying the invertebrates. The authors call it Quick Guide. The guide uses line drawings with written distinguishing features. It functions in a similar manner to a dichotomous key, but is not as complex. Section III has natural history and ecological information for each group in the book. This section presents distinguishing features, explanation of names, habitat, movement, feeding, breathing, life history, significance, and stress tolerance for each specific group. I have only two minor criticisms of this book. One criticism is that the book shows only adult beetles, when many times the larval forms are collected. This book would not help in their identification. Second, since most of the identification is pictorial, some groups (especially snails) would be difficult for beginners to distinguish. Once again, these are minor criticism and I use this book a lot. Overall, I enjoy this book on many levels and it contains a wealth of information. As an aquatic ecologist I "live and die" by McCafferty and Merritt and Cummins, but those are large, cumbersome tomes. If I need a quick check on a fact, or to see a picture, I can easily take this book into the field or wherever I need it. I strongly recommend this book to you.

Most conclusive book for learning the secrets of all the stream critters.

An excellent intro to freshwater invertebrates. A good dose of science and terminology for people who want to know how things work. It starts with a conceptual approach of what affects biological life in fresh water. But it doesn't go too far off topic; it stays focused on invertebrate life. The illustrations are superb. You don't need a college level understanding of chemistry or biology to read this, but the biology would help. This book stays on topics specific to limnology addressing substrate, water chemistry and other topics. You'll learn about lotic and lentic and other words to confuse your friends and spell checker, and impress the biologists within hearing distance. The only thing it runs short on is variety of bugs. But at 400+ pages adding the somewhat less common would create quite a tome. The first section is the only part that needs to be read from beginning to end the rest is written for reference starting with illustrations, then going into detail first on the order, then on specific (common) families. You wouldn't want them all, this part takes up more than half the book. A great book for a hobbyist that isn't afraid to put plants in an aquarium and find out what else nature keeps in its limnos. Best of all you won't have to feed your fishes after reading this book. They'll feed themselves after you've collected a few invertebrates to fill out the food chain.

I am a Michigan science teacher. I used this guide last year to assess the health of a stream with my biology students by collecting specimens with nets and unravelling their ecological relationships, which are given in great detail in this guide. (The stream turned out to be quite unhealthy!) The illustrations are without equal, the writing and organization are clear and intuitive, and a wealth of information is provided for each specimen. However, if you are looking for a guide to identify species, this is not for you; it only goes into genus and up (only a tiny handful of species are identified). But it's great for basic ID and niche determination. Worth every single cent! :)

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