

Who Lives in the Water?

Find water near you and discover aquatic invertebrates.

Materials Needed:

A small fish net, cup, or shallow pan to scoop water.

A white plastic bin or other container for collected water.

A white plastic spoon and smaller containers for viewing and sorting.

Optional: magnifying glass or microscope.

Instructions:

Find water near you (pond or slow-moving river).

Note: Always supervise children near water.

Scoop out some water from a shallow area with leaf litter or next to plants. Pour the water into the larger container. Wait for the water to settle.



Next, watch for movement. A white background makes it easier to see. If your container is transparent, slide a piece of white paper behind it to increase visibility. How many different kinds of creatures can you see? Pick them up with your spoon and sort them into an ice cube tray for a closer look.



Use your magnifying glass! If you have access to a microscope, view a sample of water under a stronger magnification. What can you see?



Each aquatic animal has special adaptations to live in water. Explore the different ways invertebrates move around!

Activity adapted from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Aquatic Invertebrate Activity and Kit.

Keep Exploring Water!

To identify species and become citizen scientists, download **iNaturalist**:



www.inaturalist.org

* For children under 13, adult authorization is required:
www.inaturalist.org/user_parents/new

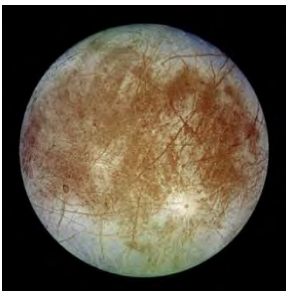
or try the **Seek by iNaturalist** app: www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app

The iNaturalist citizen science project maps observations of species around the globe. Focus on wild organisms when contributing observations. Share your observations with experts.



The species of aquatic invertebrates we find can tell us how healthy the water is. Finding caddisflies and mayflies is a good sign. What kind of biodiversity do you find near you?

Some insect species begin life in the water before becoming flying insects. Discover what young dragonflies, mosquitoes, caddisflies, and mayflies look like as larvae or nymphs.



*Jupiter's moon Europa.
Image: NASA/JPL/DLR.*

As you explore the diversity of animals in water near you, imagine what kind of life space scientists might discover in water on another planet!

nisenet.org/catalog/exploring-universe-imagining-life