

Stonefly Nymph

Fact Sheet

Order: *Plecoptera*

Families:

- *Perlidae*—Common
- *Perlodidae*—Perlodid
- *Leuctridae*—Rolledwinged

Number of species in North America: 500

Size: 5–35 mm

Similar to: Mayfly Nymph

- Stoneflies have 2 tails, mayflies have 3.
- Stoneflies have 2 claws, mayflies have 1.
- Stoneflies do not have abdominal gills, mayflies do.
- Stoneflies have long antenna, mayflies have short antenna.
- Stoneflies have a double set of wings, mayflies have one set.

Diet: Small aquatic plants (periphyton) and animals; organic debris; fungi and bacteria from decomposing leaves.

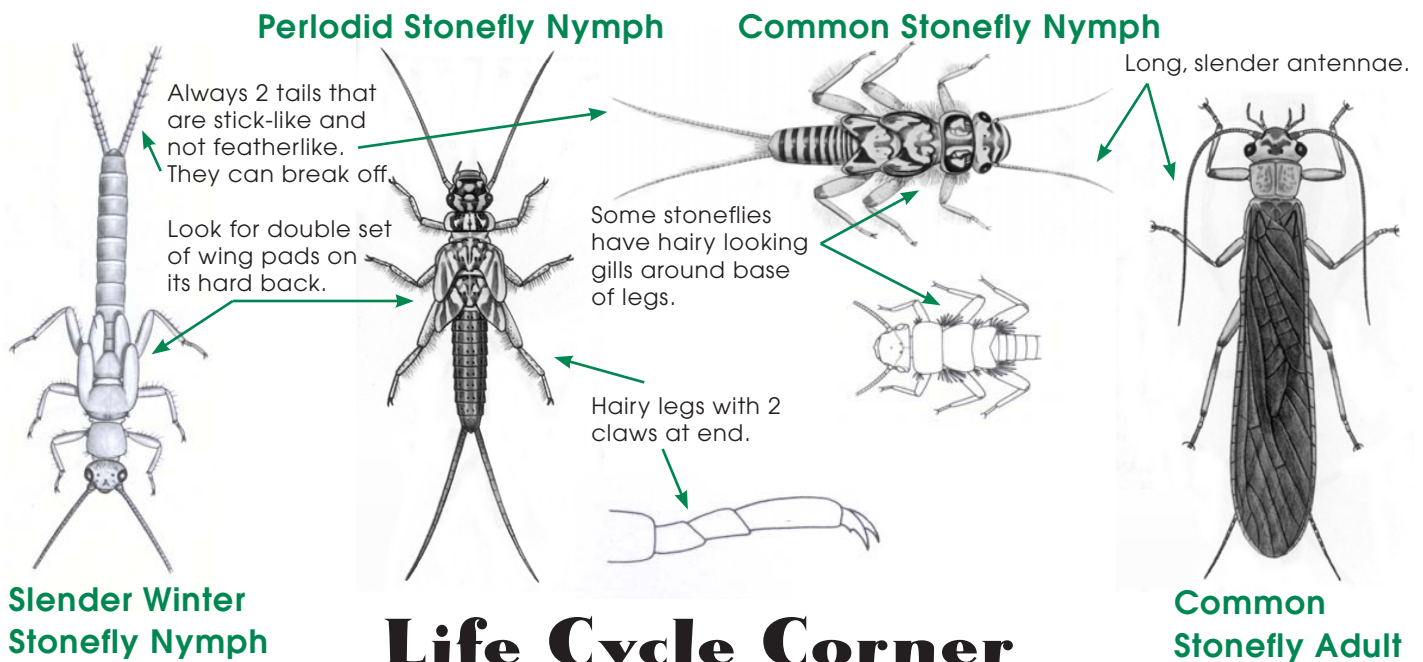
Food for: Fish (especially trout), predaceous water insects, crayfish.

Habitat: Bottom dweller, on/under rocks, flowing waters (streams and rivers), rarely ponds or lakes.

Movement: Crawling on the bottom, some drift.

Breathing: Gills, which are sometimes visible around base of legs; will do “push-ups” to elevate oxygen flow over body.

Water Quality Indicator: Group I—generally sensitive to pollution; a large number indicates good water quality.



Life Cycle Corner

Incomplete Metamorphosis

Eggs deposited in water; a sticky coating keeps them on the bottom. Larva crawl out of water and then transform into adult. Larva or nymph stage is long (months–year). Molts up to 22 times.



Images: McCafferty, W. Patrick. *Aquatic Entomology*, 1981.



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