Name Date

Mayfly Nymph Fact Sheet

Order: Ephemeroptera

Family: Baetidae—Small minnow; Heptageniidae—Flatheaded; Ephemeridae—Common Burrower

Number of species in North America: 149 Size: 3-20 mm (nymph), 5-8 mm (adult)

Similar to: Stonefly

- Mayflies have 3 tails, while stoneflies have
 Just a general rule; some species only have 2 tails. Often, tails break off easily.
- Mayflies have 1 claw, stoneflies have 2.
- Mayflies have abdominal gills, while stoneflies do not.
- Mayflies have a single set of wingpads, while stoneflies have double.
- Mayflies have short antennae, while stoneflies have long.

Facts:

- Some Mayflies use hairs on their forelegs to filter food out of the water. Most, but not all, are filter-feeders.
- Adults have triangular-shaped wings that are held straight-up when body is at rest.

Diet: Microscopic algae, small bits of organic matter, plants; a few eat other insects.

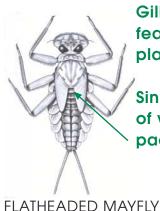
Food for: Game fish, predaceous water insects.

Habitat: Bottom dwellers; flowing waters (streams and rivers), ponds and shallow lakes.

Movement: Swim, cling to rocks, some burrow.

Breathing: Through gills on abdomen.

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



Gills found on abdomen are featherlike, flat, skinny, or plate-like.

3 pair of legs with single claw at the end.

Well developed eyes.

Single set of wing pads.

SMALL MINNOW MAYFLY NYMPH

Usually 3 tails that are stick-like and not leaf-like.



SMALL MINNOW MAYFLY ADULT

COMMON BURROWER MAYFLY NYMPH

NYMPH

Variety of gills.

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



Life Cycle Corner

Incomplete Metamorphisis Another m Adult may

Another molt will produce an adult. Adult mayflies only live a few days.

Eggs deposited in shallow riffles, under stones.



Mayfly nymph.

