

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 2. 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.

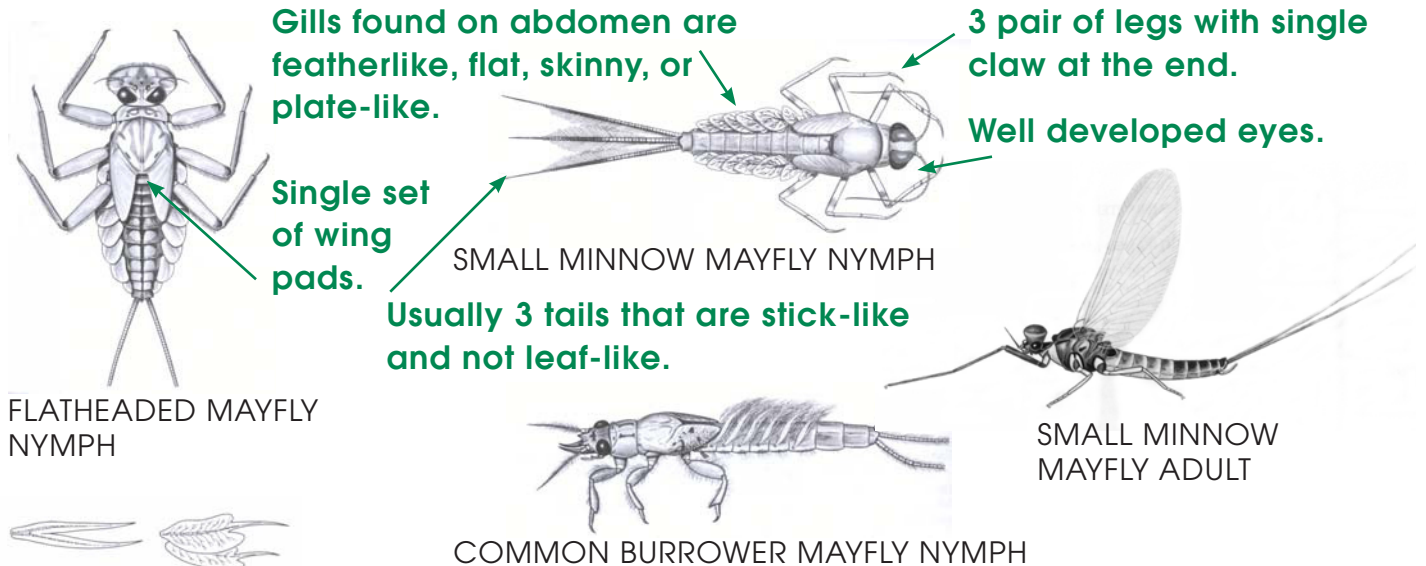
Food for: Game fish, predaceous water insects.

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

Movement: Swim, cling to rocks, some burrow.

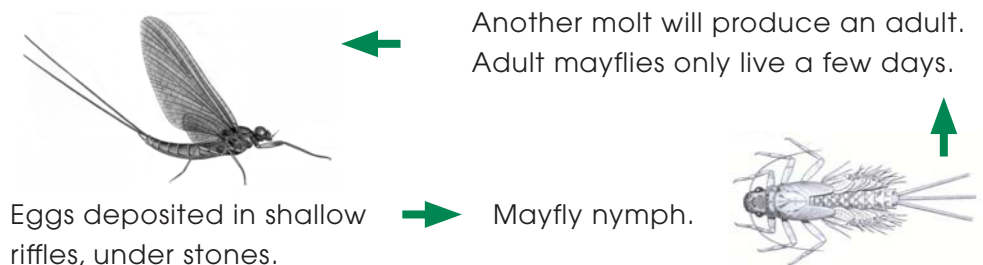
Breathing: Through gills on abdomen.

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



Life Cycle Corner

Incomplete Metamorphosis



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

