

Macroinvertebrate Fact File 7



Freshwater Limpet - sensitivity scale 7

- The freshwater limpet is called Latia.
- They live in clean running streams and rivers.
- The tiny limpet feeds by scraping algae off the stones and rocks at the bottom of the water body. For this it uses a radula, a strap-like tongue with rows of teeth.
- Their shell is up to 8 mm long and 3 mm high. They tend to face up stream for maximum streamlining so the water flows gently over them.
- Freshwater limpets do not have gills, instead they have a mantle cavity that is adapted to breathe air and function as a lung – and in some cases has been adapted to absorb oxygen from water.
- When the limpet is disturbed it sends out a luminous green substance. This is possibly to put off potential predators. The only other freshwater animals that do this are the freshwater glow-worms.
- Freshwater limpets are not endangered, although they are relatively sensitive to pollution and they don't like streams with too much slimy algae on the bed, or unshaded streams that get too warm.



**Freshwater
Limpet**

Image courtesy of Otago Regional Council

Freshwater Bug Fact File 7

Collect the fact files, laminate them and put them on to a key ring to produce a macroinvertebrate reference guide.