

Macroinvertebrate Fact File 8



Mosquito Larva - sensitivity scale 3

- Female mosquitoes feed on man, domesticated animals, such as cattle, horses, goats, etc; all types of birds including chickens; all types of wild animals including deer, rabbits; and they also feed on snakes, lizards, frogs and toads.
- All mosquitoes must have water in which to complete their life cycle. This water can range in quality from melted snow water to sewage effluent.
- Mosquitoes go through four stages in their life-cycle – egg, larva, pupa and adult.
- Female mosquitoes lay their eggs one at a time in the water, sticking them together to form a raft of from 200 to 300 eggs. Mosquito larvae emerge from the eggs within 24 hours.
- Larvae must come to the surface at frequent intervals to obtain oxygen through a breathing tube called a siphon. The larva eats algae and small organisms which live in the water
- The pupa is lighter than water and therefore floats at the surface. It takes oxygen through two breathing tubes called 'trumpets'. The pupa does not eat.
- The pupal skin splits and the mosquito emerges as an adult. The wings have to spread out and dry before the mosquito can fly.
- Most male mosquitoes live a very short time, about a week; and females live about a month depending on the temperature, humidity and time of the year.



Mosquito Larva

*Image courtesy of
Otago Regional Council*

Freshwater Bug Fact File 8

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