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A Guide To Common Freshwater Invertebrates Of North America



Synopsis

Popular interest in the observation and study of freshwater invertebrates is increasing. This book meets the needs of this growing audience of naturalists, environmentalists, anglers, teachers, students, and others by providing substantive information in easy-to-understand, non-technical language for many groups of invertebrates commonly found in the streams, lakes, ponds, and other freshwater environments of North America. Section One provides background information on the biology and ecology of freshwater organisms and environments and explains why and how invertebrates can be studied, simply and without complex equipment, in the field and the laboratory. Section Two describes nearly 100 of the most common groups of invertebrates, and for each group a whole-body colour illustration is provided along with brief text pointing out the most important features that identify members of the group. Section Three contains in-depth descriptions of the life history, behaviour, and ecology of the various invertebrate groups, and explains their important ecological contributions and relationships to humans. The Guide is broad in scope, geographically and taxonomically, and it is written at a substantive yet easily accessible level that will appeal to both novices and those with more advanced knowledge of the subject. It also contains more than 100 specially commissioned colour illustrations by the well-known scientific illustrator Amy Bartlett Wright that will greatly facilitate the easy and rapid identification of specimens.

Book Information

Paperback: 456 pages

Publisher: McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company; First Edition edition (April 19, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0939923874

ISBN-13: 978-0939923878

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 7.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (31 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #170,712 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Lakes & Ponds](#) #24 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Invertebrates](#) #82 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Marine Life](#)

Customer Reviews

This book is an excellent guide to family-level invertebrate identification. It has wonderful pictures

and excellent background information on the organisms. Section I has the fundamentals of freshwater invertebrate biology. It discusses basic ecology of invertebrates and provides generalized information about habitat, feeding, movement, breathing, and stress tolerance. This section also discusses common methods of studying freshwater invertebrates and provides references for further study. Section II has an identification mechanism for identifying the invertebrates. The authors call it Quick Guide. The guide uses line drawings with written distinguishing features. It functions in a similar manner to a dichotomous key, but is not as complex. Section III has natural history and ecological information for each group in the book. This section presents distinguishing features, explanation of names, habitat, movement, feeding, breathing, life history, significance, and stress tolerance for each specific group. I have only two minor criticisms of this book. One criticism is that the book shows only adult beetles, when many times the larval forms are collected. This book would not help in their identification. Second, since most of the identification is pictorial, some groups (especially snails) would be difficult for beginners to distinguish. Once again, these are minor criticism and I use this book a lot. Overall, I enjoy this book on many levels and it contains a wealth of information. As an aquatic ecologist I "live and die" by McCafferty and Merritt and Cummins, but those are large, cumbersome tomes. If I need a quick check on a fact, or to see a picture, I can easily take this book into the field or wherever I need it. I strongly recommend this book to you.

Anyone with an interest in the outdoors or natural history finds wonder and amazement in all organisms one comes across. Even the smallest of creatures holds fascination on those keen on natural life and many times will leave you wondering, 'What is that ??'. A GUIDE TO COMMON FRESHWATER INVERTEBRATES OF NORTH AMERICA by J. Reese Voshell, Jr. is a wonderfully complete introduction to the small organisms that we find in the shallows of our local freshwater ponds, lakes, creeks or streams. Beautifully illustrated by Amy Bartlett Wright, A GUIDE TO COMMON FRESHWATER INVERTEBRATES OF NORTH AMERICA is much more than the typical field guides on the market today. The first section of the book takes the reader through the ecology and fundamentals of freshwater biology and freshwater invertebrates. Well written in an easy to follow flow that is indicative of his 25 years of research and study, J. Reese Voshell, Jr. explains how to use this book and introduces the reader to the guidelines to effectively study freshwater invertebrates. The rest of the book is split into two parts, the first not too different from most field guides are the illustrated descriptions of 100 of the most common freshwater invertebrates with easy to follow distinguishing characteristics. This identification section is referenced by page to the

third section that contains a detailed description on the distribution, habitat, biology and feeding habits of each of the individual freshwater invertebrates. All written in an easy to follow format, A GUIDE TO COMMON FRESHWATER INVERTEBRATES OF NORTH AMERICA is a comprehensive guide and study tool, it is part field guide and part biology text, the combination of which is what makes this book unique and valuable. A GUIDE TO COMMON FRESHWATER INVERTEBRATES OF NORTH AMERICA is as complete a guide book as you will ever find or need.

If I could recommend only one book to someone interested in getting started to learn about benthic macroinvertebrates, Voshell and Wright's Guide to Common Freshwater Invertebrates of North America would be it. The colored pictures are superb, and the text is clearly written and very informative. The introductory section of the book provides information to get the novice started: what are freshwater invertebrates and why are they of interest; how are they classified; a quick look at freshwater ecology; basics of freshwater invertebrate biology; and how to study these fascinating little critters. The second section, which includes Amy Wright's beautiful pictures, provides very clearly written material on the distinguishing features of the various families. The third section, which is keyed to the second, provides information about the ecology, habitat, movement, feeding, breathing, life history, and significance (including pollution tolerance) for each of the families discussed. This book is an excellent introduction. True, it is not as complete as Peckarsky, et al, Thorp and Covich, or McCafferty and Provonsha. On the other hand, it is nowhere nearly as intimidating as these much larger, very detailed, and more technical books are. For the amateur, Voshell and Wright's Guide provides a fine stepping stone to these other, less accessible works. I should expect that a bright, interested high school student would have no trouble using this book. Certainly it was a blessing to a retired chemist who needed to get up to speed on benthic macroinvertebrates.

I purchased this title as a fly fisherman wanting to learn more about entomology. This was a very helpful book written at a high school level which is good for someone wanting to tackle the subject for the first time and to get a good grasp of the vocabulary and science before moving on to more detailed college texts on the subject. The plates and drawings are limited (one per insect discussed) but nice. This should be considered an introductory text, and helpful in that manner. Not much for the fly tyer, but good information for the fly fisherman.

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