

Macroinvertebrate Fact File 3



Water Flea - sensitivity scale 5

- Water fleas are crustaceans and are related to lobsters, crabs and shrimp
- There are around 450 different types of water fleas in the world
- They vary in length from around 0.2mm to 6mm
- They inhabit freshwater and are generally found in open water among the weeds of lakes and ponds
- Most water fleas swim by powerful strokes of the antennae, sometimes using a hopping-and-sinking motion
- Water fleas feed on algae, bacterial flora and smaller zooplankton. They are an important part of the diets of small fish and predaceous insects and their larvae
- Under normal breeding conditions, adult females produce three to nine young per brood. The fully mature females are able to produce a new brood of young about every ten days under ideal conditions
- Water fleas have a relatively short life span (about eight weeks) and mature within six to eight days after leaving the brood pouch. They rarely live for more than a year

Water
Flea



Image courtesy of Otago Regional Council

Freshwater Bug Fact File 3

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