

Let's GO to the Pond!

FIELD ID CARDS



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I am the king of fishers. I love to eat small fish, crayfish, frogs, tadpoles, and aquatic insects. Listen for my rattling call or watch for me sitting silently on my favorite perch surveying the water for unsuspecting prey. I can hover like a helicopter and then dive head first into the water to capture fish in my powerful bill. I build my nest in a tunnel in the bank of a stream or creek.

Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*)



I pull my head and legs inside my hard shell if a raccoon, otter, or mink try to eat me. One of my favourite activities is basking in the sun on a log with my turtle friends. I don't have teeth but I eat plants and small animals, such as fish and aquatic insects using sharp horny ridges on my upper and lower jaws.

Western Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta bellii*)



I am a mighty hunter in the pond. I use my brown camouflage colour and my hinged lower jaw to capture aquatic insects, especially mosquitoes and tadpoles. I breathe by drawing water in and out of my abdomen, and by forcefully expelling this water, I can move quickly with jet propulsion. I can live for 2 years in the water before I take to the air to become a dragonfly. Look for my cast-off exoskeleton on plants near the water.

Dragonfly Nymph (Order Odonata)



I am a master flier as I swoop forward, backward, side-to-side, and hover to catch my favourite food of mosquitoes.

I can eat over 100 mosquitoes a day! My huge eyes can see in every direction except right behind me. I have been around for 300 million years. My ancestors were much larger than me and could have a wingspan of almost one meter. I rest with my wings extended.

Dragonfly (Order Odonata)



I blend in with my environment as I crawl around on underwater plants. I like to eat mosquito larvae. I breathe through the 3 leaf-like gills at the back of my body. When I am ready to change into an adult damselfly I crawl out of the water onto a plant and shed my exoskeleton.

Damselfly Nymph (Order Odonata)



When you notice me resting I will have my wings folded together over my back. I am more slender and delicate-looking than a dragonfly. I have to look all around because birds and fish find me a tasty treat.

Damselfly (Order Odonata)



I will swim to the bottom of the pond when I see a shadow above me. When I am a larva I wriggle when I move. I eat algae and tiny animals. People call me a 'wiggler'. I breathe by hanging upside down from the water surface breathing through a tube, like a snorkel. When I change to a pupa I am a 'tumbler' because I look like I'm tumbling through the water. I do not eat.

Mosquito Larva and Pupa (Family Culicidae)



My excellent eyesight and high-speed dive help me to catch my prey of fish. Another name for me is 'fish-hawk'. My long hooked talons (claws) can hold tightly to a slippery fish. I migrate to warmer weather in the winter but I return to the same area and nest every spring. I close my nostrils to stop water from rushing in when I dive underwater and I have a third eyelid that I use to cover my eyes when diving.



Although you may not see me at the pond because I
come out at night, you may see my dam and my lodge.

I have large orange front teeth that never stop growing.
That's why I always have to gnaw on wood to keep my teeth
sharp. I am an herbivore and enjoy the wood of trees like
aspen, cottonwood, and willow. I may be slow on land but
using my back webbed feet I am a good swimmer. I can stay
underwater for 15 minutes. I can live up to 24 years!

Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)



Like a beaver, I am active mostly during the night and at dusk and dawn. Foxes, lynx, coyotes, owls, hawks, and eagles like to dine on me. I am an omnivore. I mostly eat plants but I also enjoy a tasty snack of snails, frogs and fish. Being semi-aquatic means I can live both on the ground and in the water. I have 2 layers of thick brown fur. The outer layer is waterproof.

Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)



I am a large blue-gray bird that stands very still while I hunt.

I use my long neck and long pointed bill to spear fish, water insects and small mammals. Sometimes I stalk my prey. This takes great patience. I nest with other herons at the tops of tall trees, building a one-meter-wide nest out of dry sticks, sometimes lining the bottom with pine needles or moss.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)



When you hear a 'quack quack' in the water that is me!

I can fly straight up from the water (that means I don't need to make a run at it to take off). I may waddle along slowly, but I can fly pretty fast. At top speed I can hit 100 kilometers per hour. A male mallard is called a drake and a female is a hen.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)



My 'konk-a-ree-ah' call is a sure sign that spring is in the air. Watch for the males that flash their red shoulder patch when attracting a mate or defending their territory. I eat grains, seeds, and insects.

Red-Winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)



Not only do I tower above other plants in the wetland with my brown fuzzy head, I am also a very useful plant to humans. Fluff from my seed head can be used for the filling of life jackets, pillows, mattresses, diapers and basketballs. My rhizome (root) contains more starch than potato and more proteins than rice. It can be ground into flour, or boiled and used as vegetable. My hundreds of tiny cattail seeds are carried by the wind for pollination.

Cattail (*Typha* spp.)



Sedges have edges. There is silica in me so touch gently, as the edges can be sharp. I have tiny flowers that are pollinated by the wind.

Sedge (*Family Cyperaceae*)



I look like a moving stick with only my head and legs peeking out of my home that I've made by using silk to attach twigs, sand grains, gravel or whatever is available at the bottom of the pond or stream. I am omnivorous eating plants, algae, and worms. As an adult I fly at night. Anglers love to use me for bait.

CaddisY Larva (Order Trichoptera)



You can find me whirling around in large numbers on the surface of the water. I am part of the 'clean-up' crew eating dead plants and tiny animals that land on the water. Watch as I take air bubbles below the surface as a supply of oxygen. I have 2 sets of eyes so I can see above and below the water at the same time. Cool!

Whirligig Beetle (Family Gyrinidae)



I eat lots of small animals. I am very different-looking than an adult whirligig beetle. I am flat and look like a centipede with long thread-like strands on my sides that are used for breathing. I pupate in soft wet soil.

Whirligig Beetle Larva (Family Gyrinidae)



As part of the pond 'clean up' crew I walk along the surface 'rowing' with my legs, eating small insects that fall into the water. My legs are so buoyant they can support fifteen times my own weight without sinking. Even in a rainstorm, or in waves, I stay afloat.

Water Strider (Family Gerridae)



I eat plants while I cling to rocks at the bottom of the pond.

Fish, dragonfly, stonefly nymphs, and predaceous diving beetles eat me. I have 2 – 3 thin thread-like filaments or strands at the end of my body but these are not gills. I breathe through the sides of my body. I am an adult mayfly for less than a day.

Mayfly Nymph (Order Ephemeroptera)



I am your 'good news' aquatic insect because I am only found where there is lots of oxygen in the water. I crawl along the bottom of the pond eating other insects that live there with me. Look for the two tail-like sensory organs sticking out from my abdomen, called cerci.

Stonefly Nymph (Order Plecoptera)



Just like my name says, I swim upside-down on my back.

I have 6 legs like all insects and the middle pair is very long. They look like the oars of a boat as I use them to move through the water. I use my front legs to grab aquatic insects and small fish. Sometimes you can see me resting by doing a headstand at an angle just below the surface. I can fly.

Backswimmer (Order Notonectidae)



I swim 'right-side up' using my back oar-like legs. I like to eat algae and mini-animals. Watch me 'tank up' as I put my abdomen through the surface of the pond to collect air. Trout eat me. I can fly to another pond if I choose.

Water Boatman (Order Corixidae)



I crawl along the bottom of ponds. I am an herbivore.

I breathe through a disk at end of my tail that sticks through the surface of water so I can take in oxygen.

As an adult, people often called me "daddy long legs."

I look like a large mosquito when I am an adult but I do not bite or spread disease.

Cranefly Larva (Family Tipulidae)



Eating everything I can I use my jaws to pierce my prey, pump in digestive juices to make a yummy insect soup, and then slurp it up. Yum! I move with a paddling motion. I breathe through my skin and the two 'spiracles' at the end of my abdomen. My main predator is another predaceous diving beetle larva.

Predaceous Diving Beetle Larva (Family Dytiscidae)



You will only find me at the bottom of the pond because I do not like light. My body is flattened sideways and I swim using my legs that move in a blur. I am a scavenger and also eat tiny animals. Fish like to eat me.

Scud or Sideswimmer (*Order Amphipoda*)



I look like a tadpole except I have feathery gills on the side of my body that help me to breathe in the water before I become an adult amphibian, living on land or in the water. I am called an eft when I am a larva.

Salamander Larva (Order Urodela)



You'll be lucky to find me because I like to hang out in the deepest parts of the pond. But if you do see me watch as I refill my 'air tank' by breathing through my abdomen and by trapping air under my wing covers. I swim with a paddling motion and eat mosquito larvae and anything else I can find. I can also fly. I go from pond to pond usually at night.

Predaceous Diving Beetle (Family Dytiscidae)



I am a favourite food for fish, birds and leeches. I use my file-like tongue called a radula to shred live and dead plants. Yum! I have a muscular foot under my body and slime that helps me crawl along rocks and logs. I breathe with a lung so need to be near the surface. My young hatch from eggs as miniature adults and crawl away to live their lives.

Pond Snail (Family Lymnaeidae)



I can be found attached to rocks or wood at the bottom of calm water. I love to eat fish by piercing it and sucking its blood. I move by 'looping', attaching my mouth and tail suckers to the surface. I do not like sunlight.

Leech (Subclass Hirudinea)



You will see me moving around the pond or in puddles with a 'whip-like' motion. I look like a horse's hair that has come to life. I am harmless to people however I am a parasite of certain insects, especially crickets and grasshoppers.

Horsehair Worm (Phylum Nematomorpha)



I get my name from the branched leaves that looks like a horse's tail. I feel rough to the touch as I have a mineral called silica in my cells. Forgot your pot scrubber while camping? I will scrub your pots clean, and I double as a nail file. I have been on planet Earth a long time. Some horsetails were the size of trees and grew more than 30 metres tall.

Horsetail (*Equisetum spp.*)

Pond Identification Cards

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