

## AQUATIC ANIMALS

### **Where are they?**

Use just your eyes at first. Look on the water surface. Are there any animals that can skate around or float directly on the water's surface film? How do you think they stay afloat?

Peer into the water. Can you see any swimmers rising to the surface for a minute, then descending again into the depths? What could they be doing at the surface? Look along submerged sticks and plants. Are there any animals lurking there, perhaps looking like a bit of the plant themselves? What about the mud and soft debris on the bottom? What could animals here find to eat?

### **Using the Strainer**

Drag the strainer through water, along the stems of submerged plants, and in the soft mud at the bottom. Rinse out excess mud by dragging more water through it. Then invert the strainer into a small dish of water for a better view.

### **Collecting**

If you're able to return them to the wetland in a few weeks, you can take some of these animals home to watch for a while. Don't try to bring everything back. Some critters would quickly eat nearly every other animal in your tank! Others simply need more room than you can give them.

Here's a quick guide to which animals you can collect -- and which to leave there:

These are okay to collect:

caddisfly nymph



water boatman



diving beetle



damselfly nymph



dragon fly nymph



snail



Let these ones go:

water strider



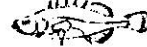
whirligig beetle



backswimmer



fish



tadpole



frogs, newts & salamanders



Transport the animals in a pail, in plastic dishes with tight-fitting lids or in the gallon jar itself. Keep the container closed only as long as you need to get the animals home, and take care to keep them cool!

Bring back enough pond water to fill your jar to just below the neck. Collect a few submerged plants so that your aquarium will resemble the environment the animals came from. Be sure to include a few sticks or water plants tall enough to break the surface of the water in your aquarium. These will be important for insect nymphs when it's time for them to emerge from the aquarium and fly away!