

# Macroinvertebrate Fact File 2



## Flatworm - sensitivity scale 3

- A flatworm moves by rowing its many tiny, thin, hair-like structures called cilia on the outside of its body. Its flat belly allows it to glide on the water surface, while its cilia gently move it along in search of food
- They breathe through their skin as they don't have a proper respiratory system
- They can regenerate a new body from a small bit of themselves, but usually lay eggs in a cocoon which they attach to stones and water plants
- They eat small crustaceans and insects both living and dead by extending a muscular tube from their mouths and sucking up the food
- You can find flatworms in dark places on plants under rocks in water. They live in streams and in the shallow part of lakes
- The flatworm's stomach is like a sack. The food goes into the sack through the mouth. Once the food is taken into the body, the waste is thrown back out of the mouth as flatworm's don't have a bottom
- Most have at least two eyespots close to the head-end of the body that help them to sense light
- Flatworms are eaten by the adults and larvae of aquatic beetles.



**Flatworms**

*Image courtesy of Otago Regional Council*

### *Freshwater Bug Fact File 2*

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