

Macroinvertebrate Fact File 5



Cranefly - sensitivity scale 5

- Cranefly larvae grow up to 2.5 centimetres long.
- Cranefly larvae may be green, white or brown in colour. They have a soft plump body resembling a caterpillar and have no legs. Some are so translucent that the dark-coloured digestive tract can be seen moving backwards and forwards as the larva crawls.
- They have a star-shaped disc of tentacles at the end of the abdomen for breathing surface air.
- They eat all sorts of things like decaying vegetation, roots, fungi and even animal matter.
- The adult flies have long wings, thin bodies and very long fragile legs (and are named after the long-legged wading bird, a crane).
- Cranefly larvae go through a full metamorphosis. They have an egg, larvae, pupae and adult stages.
- The adults live for a short time and do not eat. Adults exist to mate, lay eggs and die soon afterwards.



Cranefly Larva

Image courtesy of Otago Regional Council

Adult Cranefly



Freshwater Bug Fact File 5

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