



Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

This pictorial guide contains images of the River Flies, that are often present within the River Meon and are therefore of interest to those that fly fish that magical little chalkstream.

All the images have been reproduced with the kind permission of Cyril Bennett, who has dedicated many years to protecting our rivers, enhancing our knowledge of river flies and to whom we all owe a great debt of gratitude.

The images are of both Mayflies and Caddisflies (sedges) and include the adult and the nymph/larvae.

I would recommend using a “Matching the Hatch” guide to help you decide which artificial to use, an example of which can be found on the last page.

I hope you find it both interesting and useful.

Tightlines!

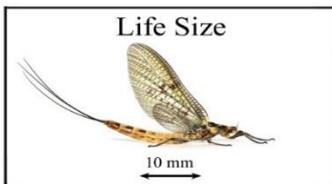
Matt Owen-Farmer

Environmental Officer



Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Female Dun
(Subimago)

Mayfly *Ephemera danica*

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Family - Ephemeridae



All gills thickly fringed with filaments on both sides

Two tusk-like burrowing projections

Main ID Features
Use Body markings on the upper body segments to separate Ephemera species:
Body markings are variable but:
1. No dark triangles (*E. vulgata*).
2. No series of (six) lines (*E. lineata*).
Common in unpolluted lowland rivers and lakes.



Ephemera danica Mayfly - Green Drake

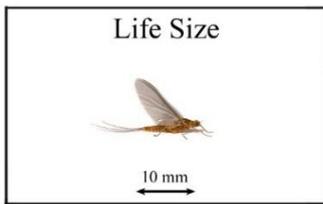


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Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



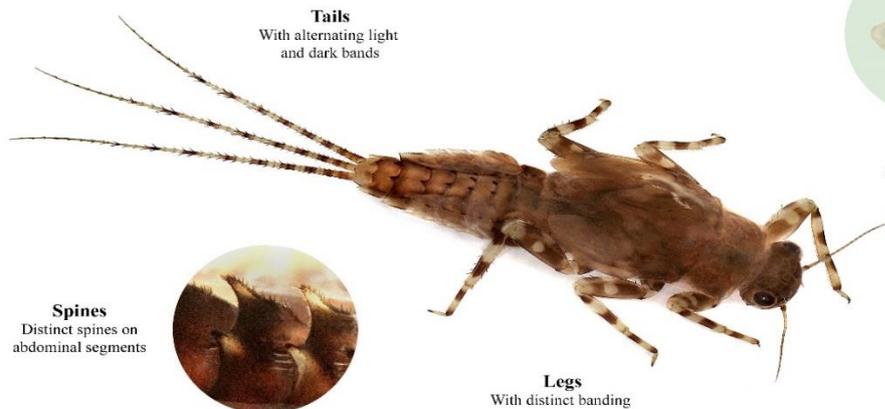
Female - Sherry Spinner
(Imago)



Blue Winged Olive *Serratella ignita*

Copyright © Cyril Bennett

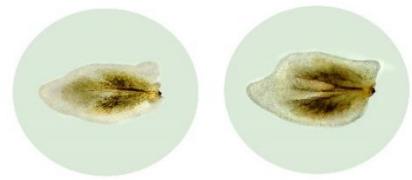
Family - Ephemerellidae



Tails
With alternating light and dark bands

Spines
Distinct spines on abdominal segments

Legs
With distinct banding



4th

2nd

Gills
Of the four pairs of visible gills, the first three are asymmetrical in shape. The small 5th pair are hidden under the 4th



Serratella ignita Blue Winged Olive

Habitat & Distribution
An extremely common species found in most rivers and streams, especially where aquatic vegetation is present.

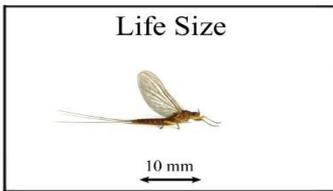


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Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



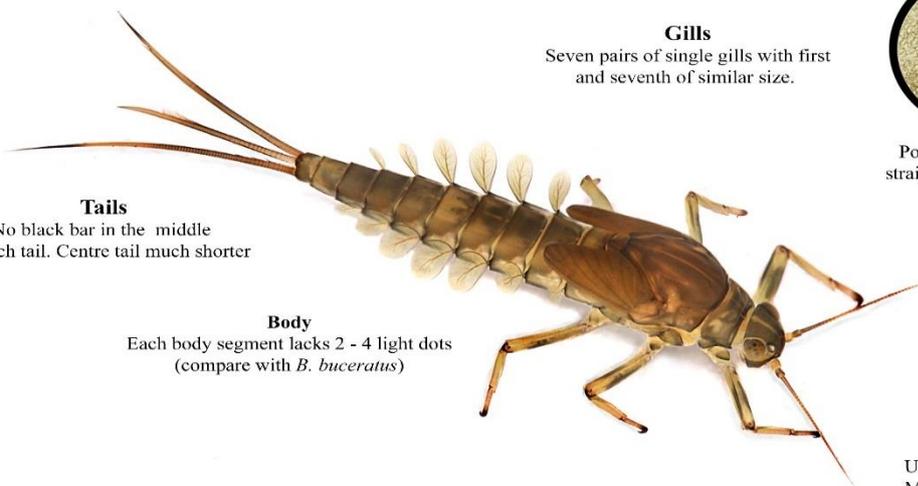
Female Dun
(Subimago)



Large Dark Olive *Baetis rhodani*

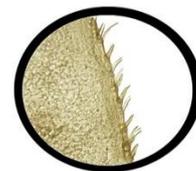
Copyright © Cyril Bennett

Family - Bactidae



Gills

Seven pairs of single gills with first and seventh of similar size.



Pointed spines on the straight edge of each gill (x400)

Tails

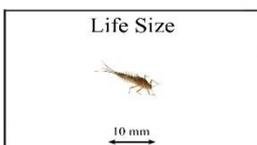
No black bar in the middle of each tail. Centre tail much shorter

Body

Each body segment lacks 2 - 4 light dots (compare with *B. buceratus*)

Distribution & Comments

Usually the most common and abundant Mayfly and found on most rivers. Larvae are present throughout the year.



Baetis rhodani Large Dark Olive

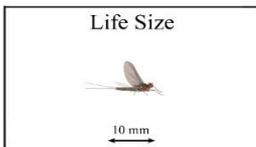


Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Male Dun
(Subimago)



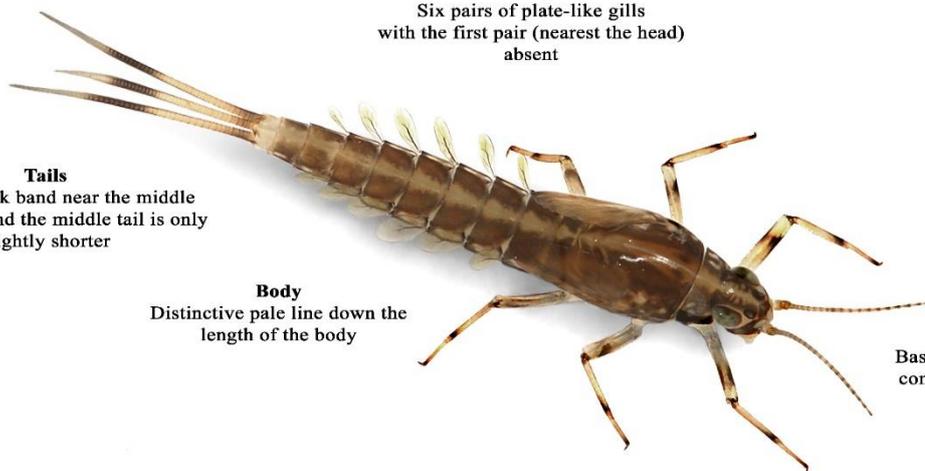
Southern Iron Blue

Baetis niger

Copyright © Cyril Bennett

Family - Baetidae

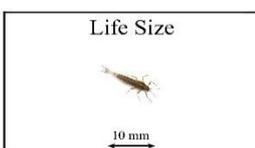
Gills
Six pairs of plate-like gills
with the first pair (nearest the head)
absent



Tails
Distinct black band near the middle
of each tail, and the middle tail is only
slightly shorter

Body
Distinctive pale line down the
length of the body

Antennae
Base close together - when
compared to wide-bodied
species



Baetis niger

Southern Iron Blue

Habitat & Distribution
Found in the vegetation in the riffle areas
of rivers and streams. Widespread in the
British Isles, but can be localised.

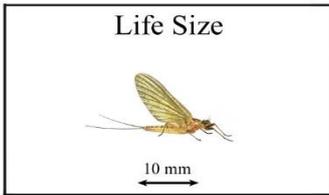


Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	D	N	D



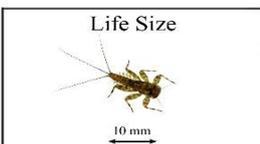
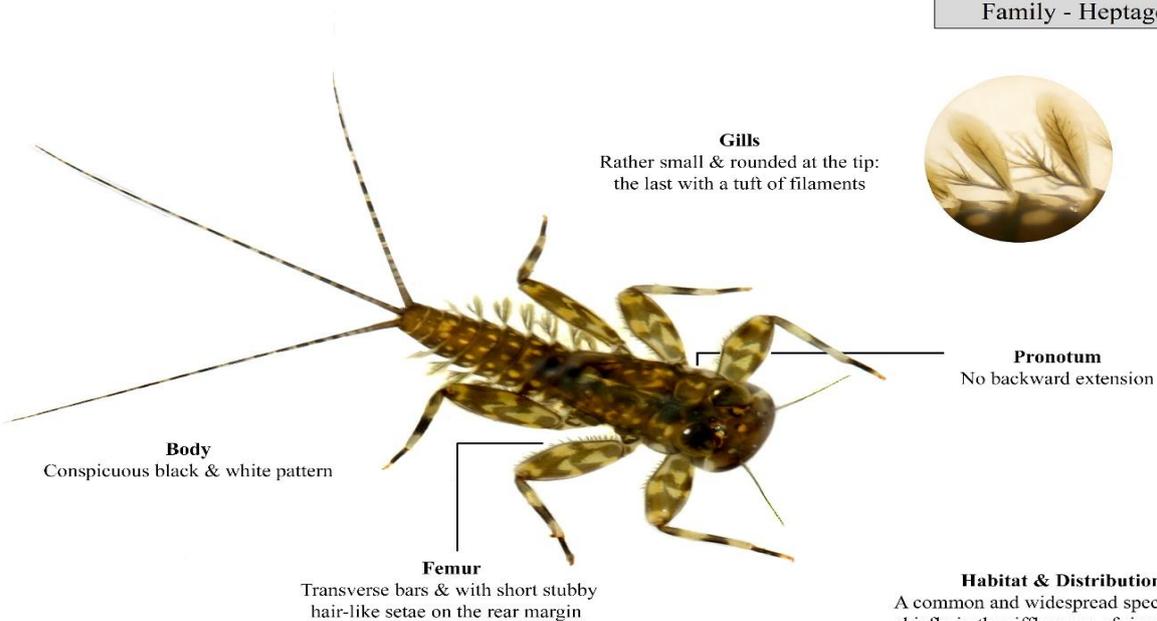
Female Dun
(Subimago)



Yellow May Dun *Heptagenia sulphurea*

Copyright © Cyril Bennett

Family - Heptageniidae



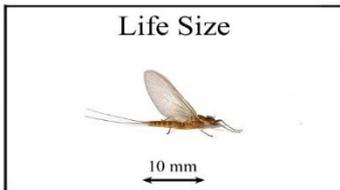
Heptagenia sulphurea Yellow May Dun

Habitat & Distribution
A common and widespread species found chiefly in the riffle areas of rivers through-out the UK, except in the south east.



Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



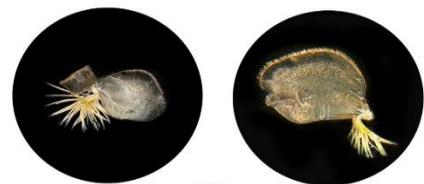
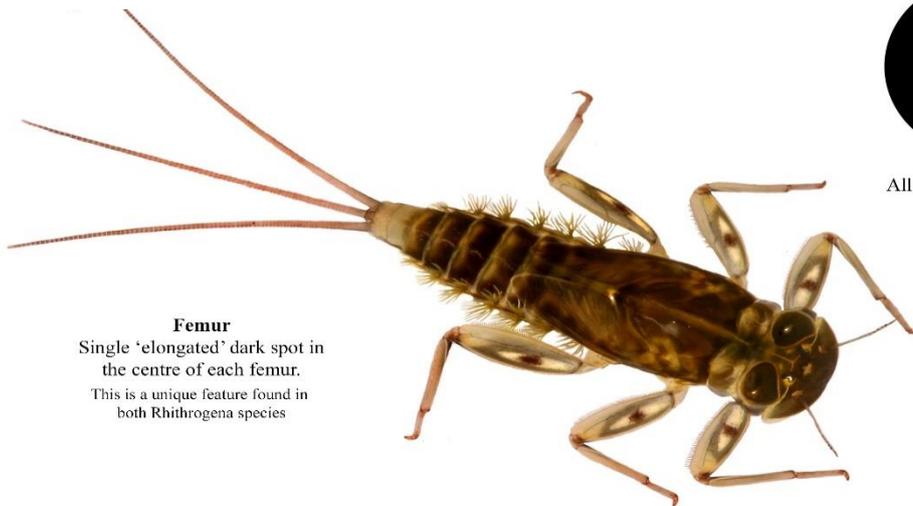
Female Dun
(Subimago)

Olive Upright

Rhithrogena semicolorata

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Family - Heptageniidae



Gills

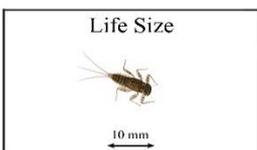
All gills consist of a plate (generally rectangular) plus a bunch of fine filaments. The first & last are larger & loosely touch under the body

Femur
Single 'elongated' dark spot in the centre of each femur. This is a unique feature found in both *Rhithrogena* species

Habitat & Distribution

Generally found in the riffle areas of upland rivers but can also be found in the upper reaches of some lowland rivers.

At present there is no reliable way of separating the nymphs of the two *Rhithrogena* species



Rhithrogena semicolorata

Olive Upright

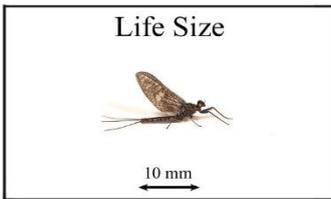


Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Male Dun
(Subimago)



Turkey Brown

Paraleptophlebia submarginata

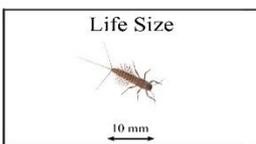
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Family - Leptophlebiidae



Gills
All gills consist of long narrow filaments with the first gill much shorter

Habitat & Distribution
A common species although never in large numbers. Nymphs are chiefly found in the pools and margins of rivers and streams.



Paraleptophlebia submarginata

Turkey Brown



Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



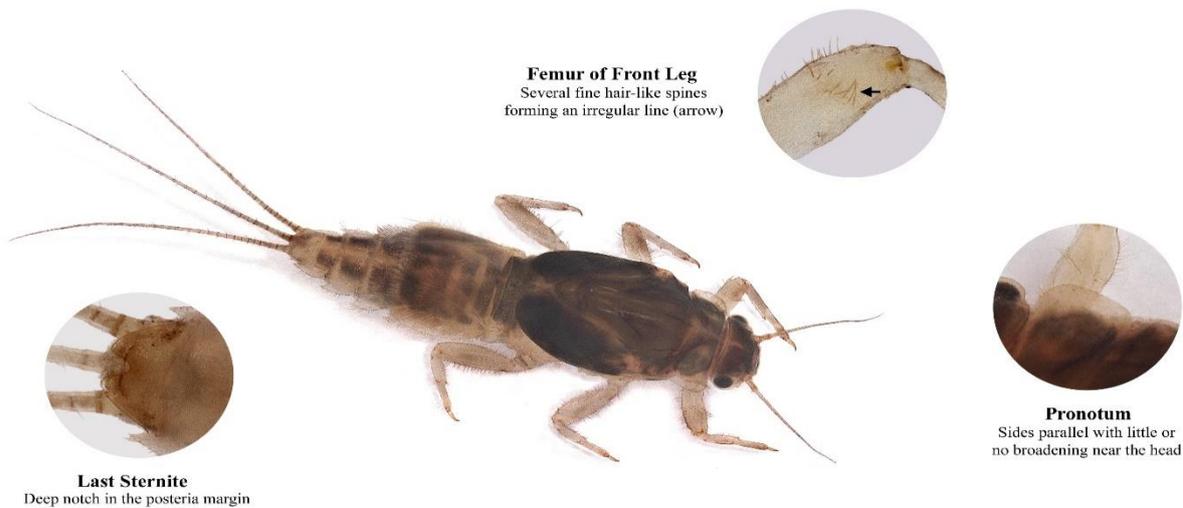
Female Dun
(Subimago)



Angler's Curse *Caenis macrura*

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Family - Caenidae



Femur of Front Leg
Several fine hair-like spines forming an irregular line (arrow)

Last Sternite
Deep notch in the posterior margin

Pronotum
Sides parallel with little or no broadening near the head



Caenis macrura Angler's Curse

Habitat & Distribution
Found in rivers especially amongst silt. The deep notch in the last sternite separates *C. luctuosa* and *C. macrura* from the other *Caenis* species, but even with the features shown it can be difficult to separate these two species. *C. macrura* is less common.

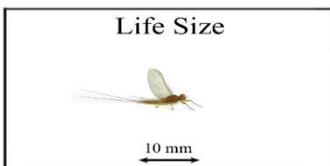


Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



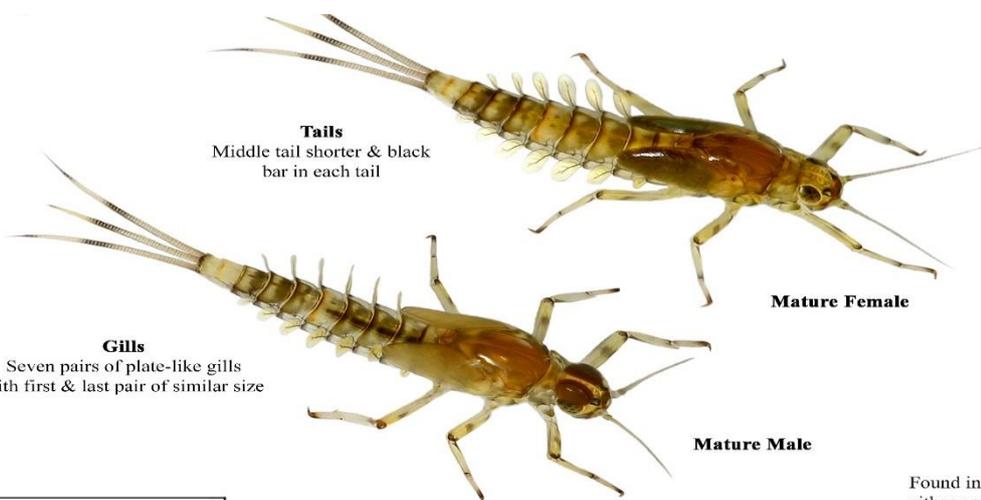
Male Dun
(Subimago)



Small Dark Olive *Baetis scambus*

Copyright © Cyril Bennett

Family - Baetidae



Tails
Middle tail shorter & black bar in each tail

Gills
Seven pairs of plate-like gills with first & last pair of similar size

Mature Male

Mature Female



Head
Base of antennae are wide apart - when compared with narrow bodied species. Markings on the head are conspicuous - when compared with *B. fuscatus* (this feature can be unreliable)

Habitat & Distribution
Found in the riffle areas of rivers & streams, either on the in-stream vegetation or amongst the sand and gravel of the river bed.



Baetis scambus Small Dark Olive

Copyright © Cyril Bennett

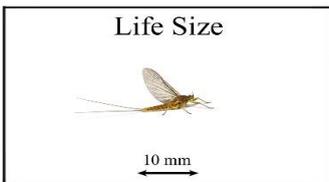


Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Female Dun
(Subimago)

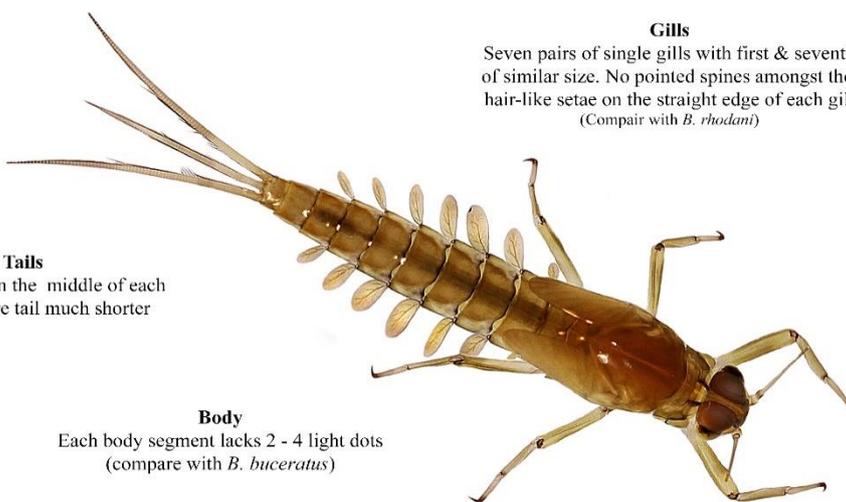


Medium Olive

Baetis vernus

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Family - Bactidae



Gills

Seven pairs of single gills with first & seventh of similar size. No pointed spines amongst the hair-like setae on the straight edge of each gill
(Compare with *B. rhodani*)



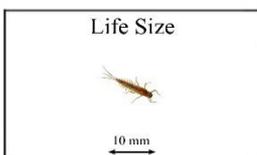
Gills (x 400)

Tails

No black bars in the middle of each tail and centre tail much shorter

Body

Each body segment lacks 2 - 4 light dots
(compare with *B. buceratus*)



Baetis vernus

Medium Olive

Habitat & Distribution

Found mainly in the pools and margins of rivers & streams amongst the sand and gravel or on the in-stream vegetation. Common in England & Wales but local in Scotland.

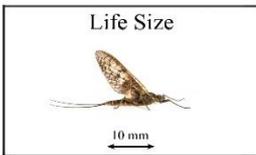


Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



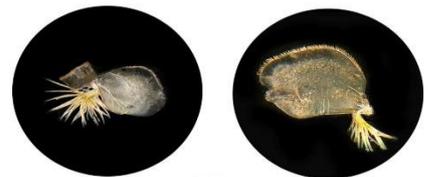
Female Dun
(Subimago)



March Brown *Rhithrogena germanica*

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Family - Heptageniidae



Gills

All gills consist of a plate (generally rectangular) plus a bunch of fine filaments. The first & last are larger & loosely touch under the body



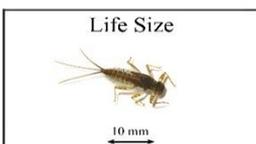
Femur

Single 'elongated' dark spot in the centre of each femur. This is a unique feature found in both *Rhithrogena* species

Habitat & Distribution

Mainly found in the riffles of large fast flowing rivers and their tributaries.

Whilst the two *Rhithrogena* species can often be identified by the size of mature larvae, there are no reliable features for separating the nymphs, which will need to be recorded as *Rhithrogena* sp.



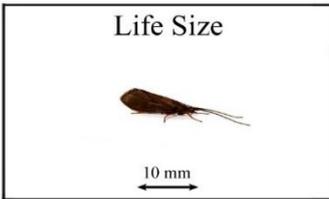
Rhithrogena germanica March Brown

Copyright © Cyril Bennett



Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Black Sedge *Silo nigricornis*

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Family - Goeridae



Cased Larva
Characteristic case with larger 'ballast' stones on either side

De-cased Larva
Body without gills

Thorax
With characteristic 'tusk like' extensions (arrow)



Mesonatal lateral sclerite (arrows) not pointed and divided into two sections (compare with *Goera pilosa*)



Silo nigricornis Black Sedge

Main ID Features

1. Distinctive case with larger 'ballast stoned' on each side.
2. Thorax with 'tusk like' extensions.
3. Compare shape of lateral sclerites to separate from *Goera pilosa*.

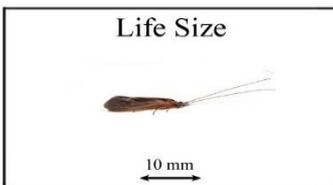
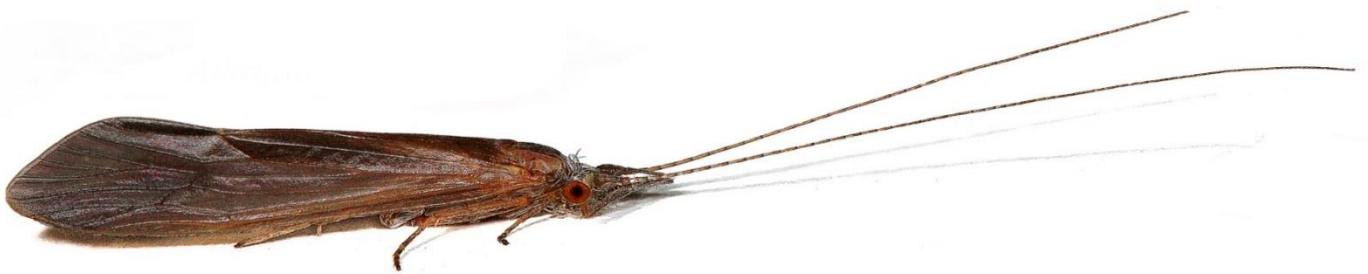
Common and widespread in fast flowing rivers and streams.

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Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Brown Silverhorn *Athripsodes cinereus*

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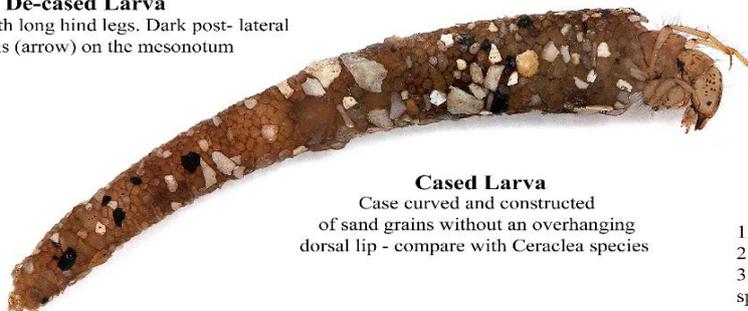
Family - Leptoceridae



De-cased Larva
Slender larva with long hind legs. Dark post- lateral projections (arrow) on the mesonotum



Head
Mandibles with two cutting edges (arrows) - this separates from *Oecetis* sp. Head with distinct dark spots



Cased Larva
Case curved and constructed of sand grains without an overhanging dorsal lip - compare with *Ceraclea* species



Athripsodes cinereus Brown Silverhorn

- Main ID Features**
1. Small larva with curved case.
 2. Long hind legs.
 3. Head pattern separates from other species

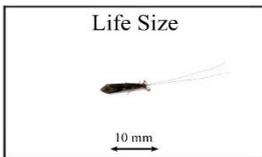
Widespread and common in rivers with a stony and sandy substrata.

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Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Black Silverhorn *Mystacides azurea*

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Family - Leptoceridae



Long rear legs usually protruding from the case



Head
With a pattern of spots but without a distinct mark (as in *M. longicornis*). Long antenna, situated near the front edge

Cased Larva
Case very slim, constructed of sand grains, usually with added weed fragments



Conspicuous thin and curved dark bar



Main ID Features
1. Larvae in very thin cases.
2. long hindlegs with pale bands.
3. Distinctive head pattern



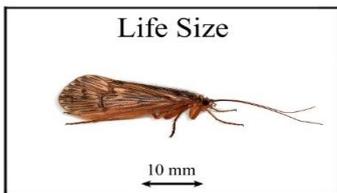
Mystacides azurea Black Silverhorn

Copyright © Cyril Bennett



Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Caperer *Halesus radiatus*

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Family - Limnephilidae



De-cased Larva
Body with single gills



Femur
Additional setae (arrow) on at least one of the 2nd & 3rd legs



Cased Larva
Large rough case made from various materials which may include a stick



Head
Mottled with a pale 'cheek' area (arrow)
Mandibles with teeth along the edges (arrow)



Halesus radiatus Caperer

- Main ID Features**
1. Rough case of various materials.
 2. Body with single gills.
 3. Head pattern.

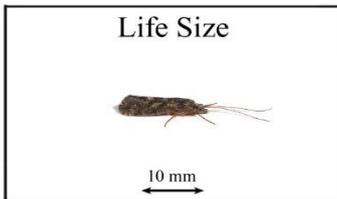
Common & widespread in streams and rivers.

Copyright © Cyril Bennett



Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Grey Flag/Marbled Sedge *Hydropsyche siltalai*

Copyright © Cyril Bennett

Family - Hydropsychidae

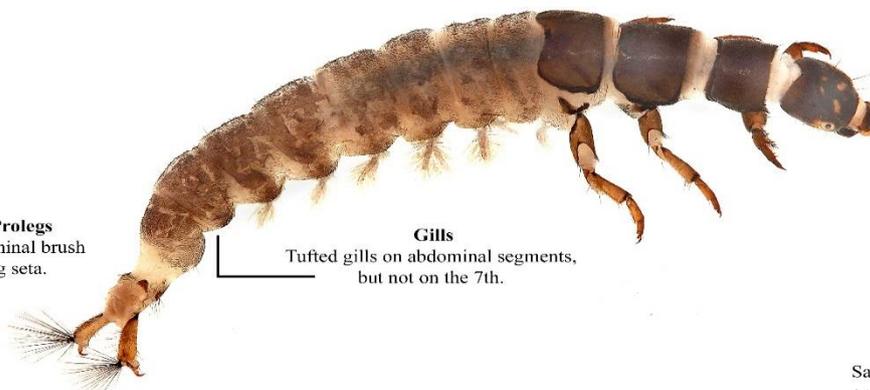
Thoracic Segments
Sclerotized plates on all three segments



Head
With conspicuous yellow markings

Anal Prolegs
With a terminal brush of long seta.

Gills
Tufted gills on abdominal segments, but not on the 7th.



Hydropsyche siltalai Grey Flag

Main ID Features

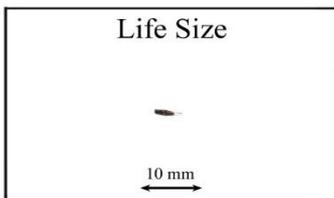
Same as *H. pellucidula* but no tufted gills on 7th abdominal segment which separates it from other *Hydropsyche* species.
Very common and found in most medium to fast flowing rivers, often in the company of *H. pellucidula*.

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Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Micro Caddis *Hydroptila sp.*

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Family - Hydroptilidae



Hydroptila sp.
Flat case of sand grains curved at the top.
(Widespread & common)



Adult



Agraylea sp.
Flat case of algal filaments mixed with translucent material.
(Widespread & common)



Oxyethira sp.
Transparent case with narrow neck



Ithytrichia sp.
Transparent oval case made of secretion and with a narrow anterior opening



Hydroptila sp.
Case of loosely attached algal filaments



Hydroptilidae Micro Caddis

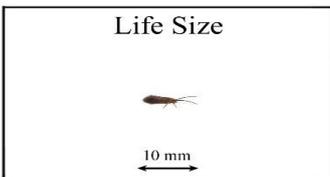
Main ID Features
Very small and & in various shaped cases.
Found in most types of waterbody.

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Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Tiny Grey Sedge *Agapetus fuscipes*

Copyright © Cyril Bennett

Family - Glossosomatidae



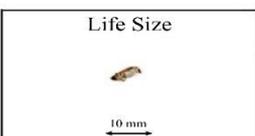
Characteristic 9th abdominal segment

Larva
In partly collapsed shelter.
No gills on abdominal segments



1. Thorax
2.
1. Two dots (sclerites) on the 2nd & 3rd thoracic segments **2.** Loose 'collar' which collapses when the larva retreats into the case

Main ID Features
1. Case is only lightly constructed with gaps in the sand grains which can easily collapse.
2. Central abdominal segments in the de-cased larva are larger and with a distinctive 9th segment
Larva in small cases attached to stones in stony streams and rivers



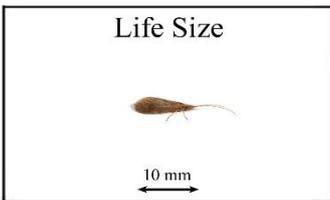
Agapetus fuscipes Tiny Grey Sedge

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Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Small Silver Sedge *Lepidostoma hirtum*

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Family - Lepidostomatidae



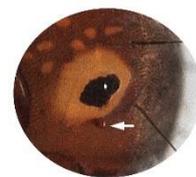
Square case made entirely of cut plant material with a ridge at each corner

Characteristic lateral projections on the 1st abdominal segment (arrows) but no dorsal projection. 4 sclerites on the metadorsal, each with a single seta



Cased Larva

Case initially made of sand grains changing to cut plant fragments arranged to give a square cross section; proportion of each material can vary. sometimes all plant.



Antenna close to eye (Can be difficult to see)



Lepidostoma hirtum Small Silver Sedge

- Main ID Features**
1. Distinctive case.
 2. Distinctive lateral projection.
 3. Sclerites on the metadorsal.

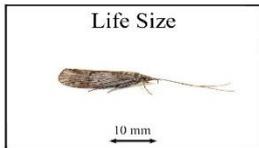
Common rivers throughout the UK

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Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association

Flight Period											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Silver Sedge *Odontocerum albicorne*

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Family - Odontoceridae

Anal Proleg
Gently curved

Gills
Multi gills on body

Head
Distinctive (but variable) anchor shape markings (Very faint in small larvae)

Case
Constructed of sand grains; strong & curved

Case End
Opening protected by a pebble



Odontocerum albicorne Silver Sedge

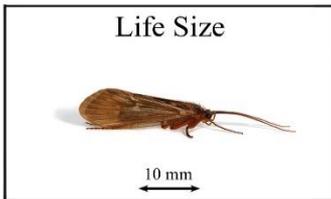
- Main ID Features**
1. Distinctive head markings.
 2. Strong curved case with pebble sealing the rear
 3. Tuft of multi gills on the body
- A common species found in stony rivers and streams throughout Britain.

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Flight Period											
J	J	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



Large Cinnamon Sedge *Potamophylax latipennis*

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Family - Limnephilidae



9th abdominal sclerite
Compare with *C. villosa*



De-cased Larvae
Body with single gills



Cased Larvae
Case of large grains of sand with a rough finish but can also be of plant or 'woody' material

1st Abdominal Dorsum
More than 5 setae on each side.



Lateral Protuberance
Posterior sclerite (arrows) lacks seta but has 1-3, usually 2, holes.



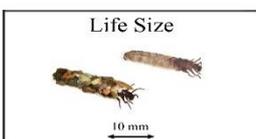
Metadorsum
More than 1 seta on each anterior-median sclerite & more than 3 seta on each posterior sclerite



Mandibles
Teeth (arrow) along the edge



2nd Femur
More than 2 setae on upper edge. 2nd & 3rd femur has no setae in area of arrow.



Potamophylax latipennis Large Cinnamon Sedge

- Main ID Features**
1. Body with single gills
 2. Lateral protuberance sclerite with 2 holes.
 3. Setae on 9th abdominal dorsal segment; compare with *Chaetopteryx villosa*. Common on most rivers.

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Family - Gammaridae



Gammarus pulex
Freshwater shrimp

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Pocket Guide to
**MATCHING
THE HATCH**



Peter Lapsley & Cyril Bennett