

# Waterbugs



*Waterbugs provide us with an indication of the health of our waterways.  
Their presence or absence is used to assess river health.*

## What are waterbugs?

Waterbugs, or aquatic macroinvertebrates, are small creatures that have no backbone and can be seen with the naked eye. They live all or part of their life in the water, providing a food source for larger animals such as fish, frogs, birds and platypus.

Waterbugs include snails, beetles, dragonflies, yabbies and worms.



## Where are they found?

Waterbugs live in different habitats within waterways. They can be found:

- above the surface
- on the surface
- among vegetation and debris
- beneath the surface
- in open water
- among rocks, litter and sediment.

[www.waterbugblitz.org.au](http://www.waterbugblitz.org.au)





Waterbugs are macro-invertebrates – this means we can see them without a microscope and identify them by their physical features.

Waterbugs are important to aquatic environments and we conduct surveys of them to help assess the health of waterways. In this activity you are going to learn how to identify waterbugs using The Waterbug App from home. You don't even have to get your feet wet!

**STEP 1** Download **The Waterbug App** onto your phone or tablet.



**STEP 2** Imagine you're at your favourite local waterway. You have been using a net and a bucket to collect some waterbugs by swishing it through the water. Now you have sorted and organised all the waterbugs you found into an icecube tray and they are pictured on the 'What Waterbug Am I?' activity sheet. We're now ready to start identifying them using The Waterbug App.

**STEP 3** Open The Waterbug App and select IDENTIFY. Then use the KEY to start identifying your waterbugs. Stop when you get to Order and record this next to the waterbug you've identified. You can also use SPEEDBUG to help as well.

Videos via [www.waterbugblitz.org.au/Resources](http://www.waterbugblitz.org.au/Resources) show how to complete a full survey and use the App if you need help.

**Remember – Please do not submit this data via the App.**

For more information about waterbugs and activities you can do in your local area, check out the **Waterbug Blitz Education Resource for Australian Schools**.

[https://www.waterbugblitz.org.au/cb\\_pages/resources.php?category\\_id=](https://www.waterbugblitz.org.au/cb_pages/resources.php?category_id=)

This activity has been prepared in partnership with the National Waterbug Blitz and Hunter Water.



# WHAT WATERBUG AM I?

You have found all these waterbugs but how do you know what they are?

Open the **The Waterbug App** on your phone or tablet and select **IDENTIFY**. Use the **KEY** to start identifying your waterbugs. Stop when you get to **Order** and record the name next to the waterbug you've identified. You can also use **SPEEDBUG** to help you identify them as well.

for example:  
**Hemiptera**  
(Backswimmer)

