

Survey guide

Pond dipping

Pond dipping is one of the most well-known survey methods for freshwater. It's commonly used with children but is a great way of seeing what wildlife is about. Despite its name, pond dipping is used to survey invertebrates in ponds, lochs and other small water bodies.

Equipment

- A tray deep enough to hold some water
- A sieve or net
- A magnifying glass can be useful for identification

Method

- Scoop some pond water into your tray. This is to put anything you catch in so don't worry about getting lots of wildlife at this stage.
- Next, gently sweep your net under the water, trying not to disturb any mud at the bottom. A figure of eight pattern works well.
- Lift your net out of the water and turn it inside out so anything you've caught drops into the water in your tray.
- After you've had a look and identified your catch, carefully tip the water back into the pond. Hold the tray close to the water so that any creatures in the tray don't fall from too high up.

Considerations

- Be careful of deep water when pond dipping with children. Some ponds have pond dipping platforms which can help.
- Invertebrates that live in the mud and sediment at the bottom of the pond are less likely to be surveyed. Avoid dragging your net through the mud and sediment as you are unlikely to catch anything and it will disturb anything living there.

