

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

# PLAY

Spring  
2006

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

## Six Legs Underwater *by Walt Dietz*

Anglers sometimes wonder which bait to use when fishing. Most of us are familiar with baits like corn, cheese and dough balls. We might also use live baits like minnows or worms. But there is another bait. It's easy to collect. You can even wait until you get to your fishing spot to obtain it. Do you have any idea what it might be? Here is a clue: Lift a rock the next time you go fishing. Then take a close look.

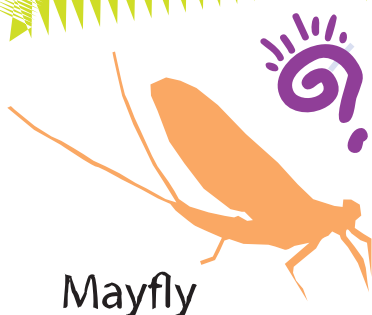
You guessed right if you were thinking "aquatic insects." Bass, panfish, trout, carp, suckers and catfish eat aquatic insects. There are plenty of these tasty treats in our ponds, streams and rivers. There are lots of different kinds and sizes.

Aquatic insects are more than food for fish. They are also important in the aquatic ecosystem. Some are predators. They eat other insects and small fish. Other aquatic insects eat plants. Still others are the garbage collectors of the stream because they eat dead animals and litter (dead plants, leaves and debris). Some scientists even use aquatic insects to tell them about the quality of the water—just like a canary in a coal mine. They measure how many kinds of insects live in certain waterways and how many of each kind of insect live there.

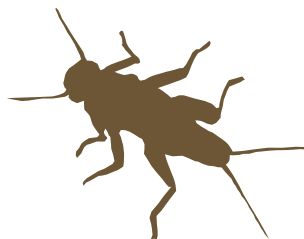
Let's take a closer look at aquatic insects—where they live, their life cycle and how we can use them for bait.



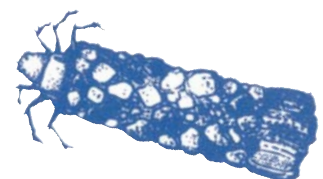
Which one should I eat?



Mayfly



Stonefly nymph



Caddisfly larva