

Flatworm

Flatworms like to lurk in dark places in waterways.

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Pollution tolerance	Very sensitive Sensitive Tolerant Very tolerant
Size	Up to 10 mm long

What they look like

As their name suggests, they are wormlike and flat without segments on their bodies. They have a soft skin with hair, generally down the side. The smaller species of Flatworm wave their hair to propel themselves! The larger species move across the bottom of a waterway in a gliding fashion, helped by muscular waves that ripple down their body, but cannot swim.

Where they live

Flatworms are found in streams and shallow parts of lakes. They live in dark places on the surface of rocks and plants.

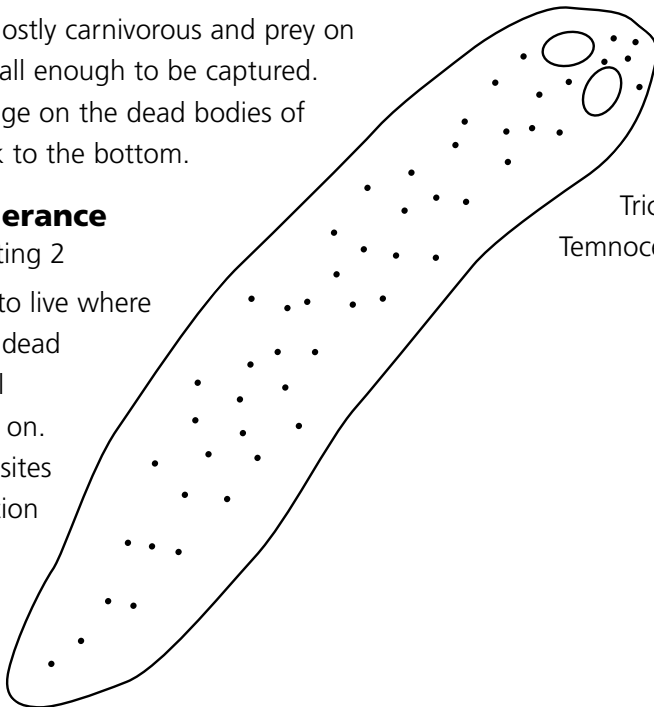
What they eat

Flatworms are mostly carnivorous and prey on invertebrates small enough to be captured. They also scavenge on the dead bodies of animals that sink to the bottom.

Pollution tolerance

Very tolerant, rating 2

Flatworms tend to live where there are lots of dead plant and animal remains to feed on. This means that sites of organic pollution are good for Flatworms.



What's interesting about Flatworms?

- Flatworms can glide over surfaces, or the underside of a surface film of water, using small body hairs for movement.
- The stomach is like a sack. The food goes into the sack through the mouth. Once the food is taken into the body, the rest is thrown back out of the mouth. (They have no anus).
- They reproduce sexually (having both male and female organs) and asexually by splitting. Each piece that is split off becomes a separate worm.
- They also reproduce by regeneration. They do this by producing a new worm from a broken piece.

Where they fit in

Phylum Platyhelminthes > **Class**

Turbellaria > **Order** (Four orders):

Tricladida; Rhabdocoela; Alloecoela;

Temnocephala.