



Freshwater Worm

There are all sorts of Freshwater Worms; short ones and long ones, skinny and chunky - even coloured ones!

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Pollution tolerance	Very sensitive Sensitive Tolerant Very tolerant
Size	1 - 30 mm long

What they look like

Freshwater Worms have segmented bodies with rounded ends and no suckers or legs. Many are red or flesh coloured. The Megadrili are large and robust worms, which look much like earthworms. The Microdrili are smaller and more slightly built. Some species are short with few segments and with the body clearly divided into specialised regions. Others have a few to several hundred segments. A few species have obvious external gills.

Where they live

Freshwater Worms occur in a wide range of conditions, in still and running water.

What they like to eat

Freshwater Worms feed on organic material and bacteria that occur in silt and mud. A lot of the mud is eaten but not digested.

Pollution tolerance

Very tolerant, rating 2

Freshwater worms can live in streams with organic pollution because they can survive in the low oxygen environment. They feed on the algae and bacteria that grow in these environments.

What's interesting about Freshwater worms?

- Some families can reproduce by budding. A new worm grows by splitting off the original one.
- A worm grows more segments as it gets older. The older segments are near the head and the younger ones near the tail.

Where they fit in

Phylum Annelida > **Class** Oligochaeta and smaller class Aphanononeura > **Order** (two super orders): Megadrili and Microdrili > **Family** (Nine families): Oligochaeta and one from Aphanononeura

