

Why Pond dipping?

Pond dipping is a fun and simple way for children to explore an aquatic habitat. Children will be able to observe a diversity of different creatures from leeches to dragonfly nymphs. It is a useful tool in delivering the science primary curriculum section on life process and living things (Sc2). It can also be used as a stimulus for art, English or maths activities.

How to Pond dip for self led groups

The Ecology Centre will provide all the equipment needed. This will consist of white trays (one per pair), magnifiers (one per pair), nets, identification sheets and keys.

At the wildlife area there is a large dipping platform by the wildlife pond. Before starting pond dipping with the group please remind them of health and safety and behaviour rules. Ask the group to sit away from the pond.

Half fill the white trays with pond water, place the trays along the platform pond's edge and put a net either side of the trays. Invite children to start pond dipping; younger children should lie on their stomachs with only their heads peering over the pond platform edge whilst older children can kneel by the edge.

Up to six pairs (12 children) can do pond dipping at once. In large groups the waiting children could look at a dipped tray or do sketching of the pond.

Allow the children up to ten minutes to pond dip. Adults should then carry the trays to a place on the platform away from the pond edge and hand each pair a magnifier to observe their finds.

The best way to pond dip is to make a figure of eight or a circle in the water. Dipping by plants or by the edge is often more productive. Try not to dip too much mud as this will make it hard to see any creatures caught. Turn the net gently inside out into the pond tray so the creatures can swim out. Let the water settle and look at what you've caught.

After dipping gently tip the tray water back into the pond and rinse the trays and nets in the pond.

