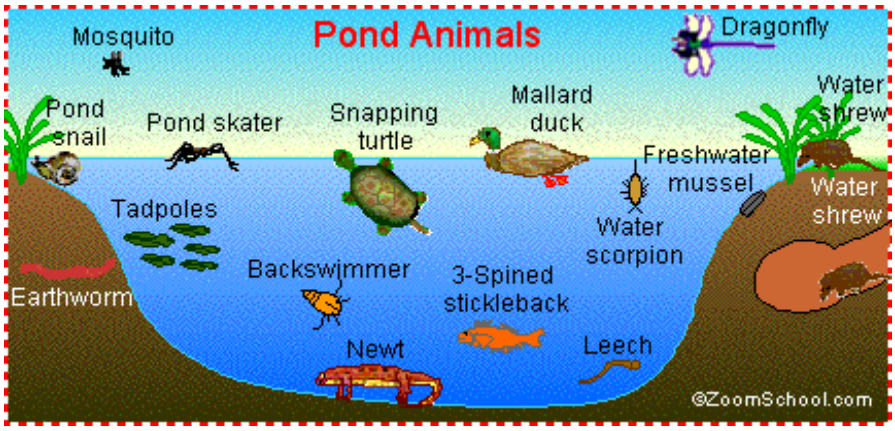
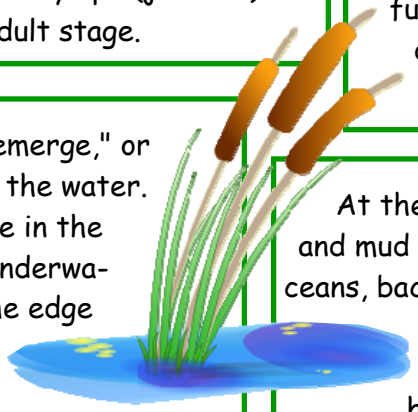
Life in the Pond

On the surface of the pond there is a thin, strong layer of film where many tiny animals live. **Water striders** can walk on the film, and **pond snails** can glide upside down on it. **Duck weeds** float freely on it, with tiny roots dropping down into the water, while **lily pads** float on the surface and their stems reach all the way down to the bottom. The surface film is very important to aquatic insects, which use it to change from the nymph (juvenile) stage to the adult stage.

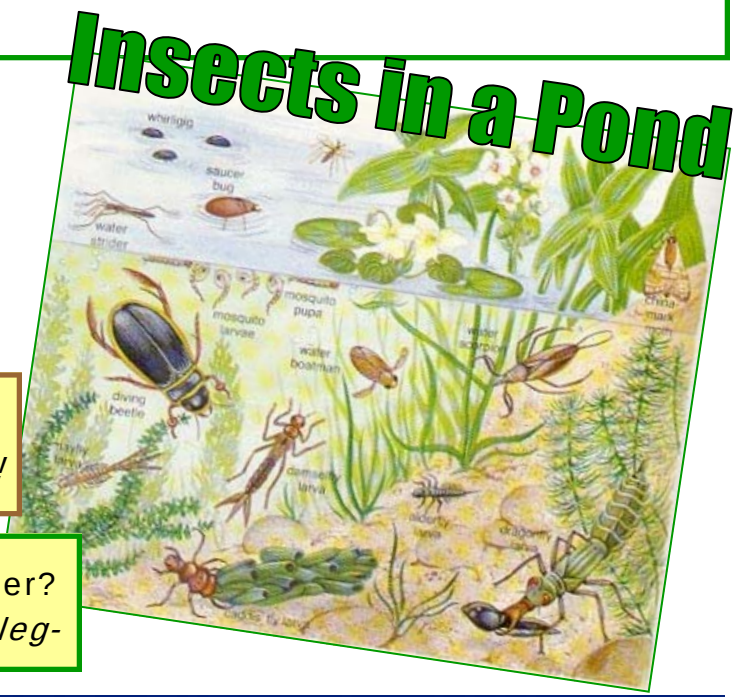


In the middle, the animals breathe through their gills, or skin. Some light reaches this habitat through the water but the further down the animal goes, the darker it gets! Food is difficult to find and most animals have to either hunt at the surface, around the edges, or scavenge the bottom.

Some plants "emerge," or rise up, out of the water. Their roots are in the mud bottom, underwater, or near the edge of the pond. These include cattails, sedges, bulrushes, reeds, and arrowheads, and they provide important shelter for pond animals, such as frogs, snakes, and muskrats.



At the bottom there is lots of decaying plant matter, stones, and mud which provide food for the tiny insect larvae, crustaceans, bacteria, and algae. In winter, turtles and frogs bury themselves in the bottom to hibernate. Plants that grow here spend their entire lives underwater. Bladderworts and horntails are examples, and these provide structure for aquatic insects to climb on and food for animals, such as ducks and snails.



Bug Fun!

Why wouldn't they let the butterfly into the dance? *Because it was a moth ball!*

Why did the girl spider slap the boy spider? *Because he touched her leg-leg-leg-leg-leg-*