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Predator prey interactions using dragonfly naiads

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Abstract

Dragonflies (Order: Odonata; suborder Epiprocta) are hemimetabolous insects which are commonly found in shallow freshwater habitats world-wide. The dragonfly immature stage (commonly referred to as nymphs or naiads) are voracious predators on other aquatic organisms including mosquito larvae, amphipods (scuds), daphnia, small fish, and tadpoles. As a result, naiads can be used as model organisms for investigating numerous physical, chemical, and biological factors which affect their feeding efficiency. Some of these factors include prey species, prey size predator species, predator size, aquatic vegetation, illumination, and space. Laboratory exercises designed to investigate several of these interactions will be presented.

Keywords: insects, predation, model organism, aquatic

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