

Basic River Oligochaete Field Identification

- Lumbricidae & Lumbriculidae C



- Enchytraeidae & Naidinae D



- Tubificinae E



Lumbricidae & Lumbriculidae Group C

Lumbricidae

6 species can live for some time in Irish freshwaters.
Only *Eiseniella tetraedra* is truly aquatic.
Look like small earthworms (same family).



Lumbriculidae

4 species in Irish freshwaters (2 common, 2 rare).
Smaller and thinner than Lumbricidae, but more robust than tubificids and don't curl up as much as the latter.
No hair chaetae
Stylodrilus heringianus breaks like wet spaghetti if you try to pick it up with a forceps.



Enchytraeidae & Naidinae Group D

Enchytraeidae

Very difficult to identify to species (internal organs need to be examined).

Some semi-aquatic.

Thin, usually white/transparent.

No hair chaetae.

Do not curl up.

Usually in low numbers.



Naidinae 21 species in Irish freshwaters.

Tiny.

Most can swim.

Usually in low numbers.

Pollution tolerance varies between species.

If in high numbers, usually *Nais elinguis*, which is very pollution tolerant



Tubificinae Group E

18 species in Irish freshwaters.

Most are pollution tolerant.

Hair chaetae present in most species.

Psammoryctides barbatus, which is found in low numbers at sandy sites, is not very pollution tolerant.

Curl up into a ball, especially when disturbed.

