



HMWT Chalk Stream Challenge - Stream Dipping Guide

Kick sampling is the way scientists measure the biodiversity of the river. Certain Species of invertebrates (creatures without a backbone) indicate how healthy the river is. Many of the invertebrates will be living under the rocks or the sediment in between. This method of sampling is a good way to catch them!

What you will need:

- A good net
- A tray or Tupperware boxes (white coloured is better to see what you have caught)
- A spoon
- A magnifying glass
- ID sheets
- Wellies (the rocky riverbed can be sharp do not go in with bare feet)
- Hand sanitiser

Fill your trays with river water and place on the riverbank.

With your net wade into the middle of the river.

Place the net downstream of yourself flat along the riverbed with the net mouth open.

Start to kick around the substrate and rocks (side to side) upstream of your net mouth. The flowing water should take any invertebrates you disturb into the net.

Continue to do this for a few minutes, you can move upstream and repeat.

Another technique used alongside this is “hand searching” as many invertebrates cling on to rocks and pebbles.

Pick up a stone and lightly brush the surface into the net using your fingers.

If there is vegetation in the middle of the channel or at the sides you should do some further sampling here. Using a sweeping method gently move your net through the plants.

Empty your catch into your trays of river water. You can remove any large stones or plants.

Using the ID sheets, spoons and magnifying glasses explore what you have in your trays.

The quantity and variety of invertebrates will indicate how healthy the stream is.

After you have finished return the water and creatures to the river.

Make sure you wash your hands and equipment thoroughly!