

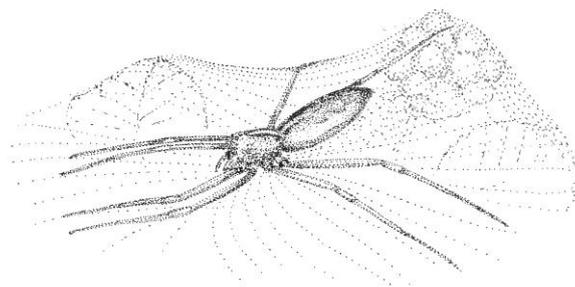
Invertebrates ('Minibeasts')

There is no certainty over numbers, but this army of creatures is extremely large - approaching one million identified species worldwide. Some 96% of the animals on Earth are invertebrates. Generally characterised by having no internal skeleton with its spinal column, they exhibit an amazing variety of forms and have a legion of adaptations enabling them to occupy nearly all the microhabitats available on the planet. The presence of an exoskeleton and spiracular respiration are two factors that restrict growth potential and few terrestrial forms attain any great size as adults.

The fauna of the British Isles is not large when compared with that of other countries such as Brazil. Several countries of the European land mass (e.g. France and Germany) host more species. Comparison of the different faunas is extremely interesting and can provide insight into the origins and establishments of these over time.

*Some of the most fascinating invertebrates are those which are almost universally present. The Drone Fly (Diptera: *Eristalis tenax*) which patrols the garden pond, may be found in many of the world's fresh water habitats. It evidently has characteristics enabling it to be a super survivor! On the other hand, some invertebrates are so specialised in their requirements that minute changes can lead to extinction. Knowledge of the location of distinctive wildlife habitat and insistence that it is respected, are essential for the survival not only of the super specialists, but an increasingly large group of newly endangered species as mankind's occupation of the planet's surface becomes an ever increasing threat.*

Smaller size and the presence of winged forms have been crucial in the ability of many invertebrates to distribute themselves all over the planet. Wherever you go, you may be carrying a small invertebrate with you. If you have a car, you are likely to have a resident spider in the exterior mirror housing.



How many different invertebrates live in the Sandwell Valley ?

Many invertebrate orders are not included here. Most of the ones that have received coverage are shown below. The totals show the state of the work in March 2017.

REMEMBER THAT QUITE A FEW OF THESE SPECIES STILL NEED CHECKING!!

ORDER	COMMON NAME	NUMBER OF SPECIES
Mollusca	Slugs and snails	25
Hirudinea	Leeches	3
Diplopoda	Millipedes	6
Chilopoda	Centipedes	6
Ephemoptera	Mayflies	2
Odonata	Dragonflies	17
Plecoptera	Stoneflies	4
Orthoptera	Grasshoppers	6
Dermaptera	Earwigs	2
Psocoptera	Barkflies	6
Hemiptera	Bugs	118
Mecoptera	Scorpion flies	2
Trichoptera	Caddis flies	49
Neuroptera	Lacewings	15
Coleoptera	Beetles	496
Lepidoptera	Butterflies and Moths	700
Diptera	True Flies	1260
Hymenoptera	Bees, Wasps and Ants	314
Isopoda	Woodlice	6
Pseudoscorpionida	Pseudoscorpions	2
Arachnida (Opiliones)	Harvestmen	7
Arachnida (Araneae)	Spiders	98
2017 PROVISIONAL INVERTEBRATE SPECIES TOTAL		3144