

Bugs on the snow—*Bob Armstrong*

Some aquatic insects emerge from our streams as adults in midwinter and crawl about on the snow. Their purpose is mating. I usually take photographs of them and with the help of John Hudson (an entomologist) we can at least identify them to family. The larger ones have been caddisflies and stoneflies and the smaller ones have been dance flies and midges.

These events seem to occur after a couple days of above-freezing temperatures, especially if the sun is shining. By emerging in midwinter, it may be easier to find a mate with lower numbers of species flying about, and there are fewer predators such as insect-eating birds and dragonflies. I do, however, find wolf spiders crawling on the snow at the same time, no doubt looking for a midwinter feast.

Very tiny creatures called springtails can also be seen on the snow in midwinter. Springtails are insect-like invertebrates, but despite the fact that they have six legs, they are not considered insects, belonging instead to a group called Hexapods.

- 1) caddisfly 2) stonefly 3) dance fly 4) springtail 5) wolf spider.

