

Do You Know?  
series

AGES 6+

# Do You Know? The Firefly Leech





## The Firefly Leech

The Firefly Leech is a very special type of leech that lives in the Pacific Northwest in fresh water.



leeches like frogs too!

What does it eat?

Like many leeches, the Firefly leech is hematophagous - that means it feeds on blood. Leeches only eat what they need, and drop off their hosts once they are full.

Where does it like to live?

Wet and warm places, like wetlands or ponds. Leeches can live outside of water too, finding food on land if needed.

How big is this leech?



How big are they?

This leech is pretty big, but not the biggest! The Firefly leech is about 200mm long. The largest species of leech is almost 500mm long. That's as tall as the seat of a chair!

Did you know that the Firefly Leech has another name? *Hirudinea lampyrus* is our latin name for the Firefly Leech. *Hirudinea* is for the leech family, and *lampyrus* describes it's likeness to the firefly. Cool!

What makes the Firefly Leech unique?

The Firefly Leech reacts to the food it eats through photophores in its skin, creating something called bioluminescence. This means it can light up and glow. What makes the Firefly Leech different is that these lights change colour according to the emotions of the last host it had a meal from.



These animals are also bioluminescent!

Did you know that we don't know why the Firefly Leech shows us emotions? We might never know - we have to respect all beings whether we can decipher their knowledge or not.



A leech and a scientist, two friends!

Is the Firefly Leech helping the environment?

Yes! The Firefly Leech has gifted science with a special way to know how animals in the eco-community are feeling. We want to respect the feelings of all species and the Firefly Leech helps us do that.

Colour the Firefly leech!

The Firefly leech has many different colours for many different emotions.

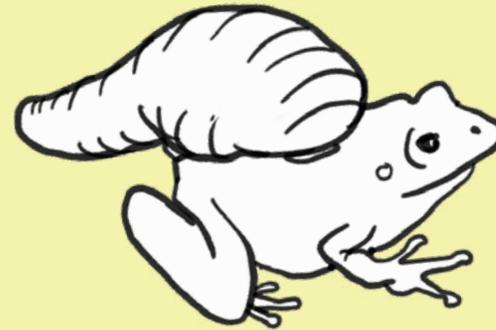
What colour will the leech be for 'Happy'?

What colour will the leech be for 'Sad'?

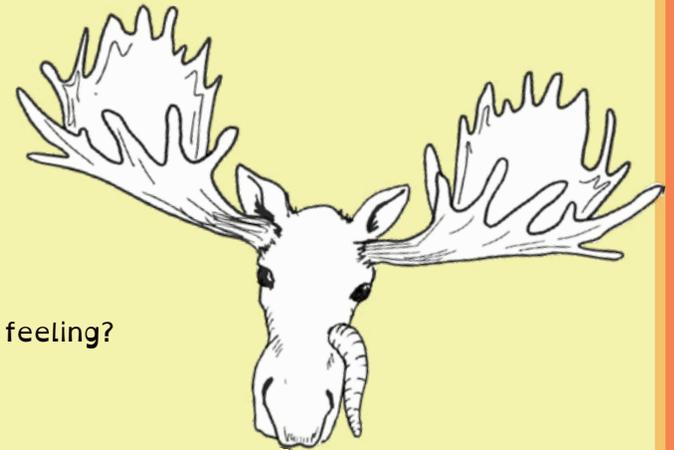
Colour the animals on the other page!



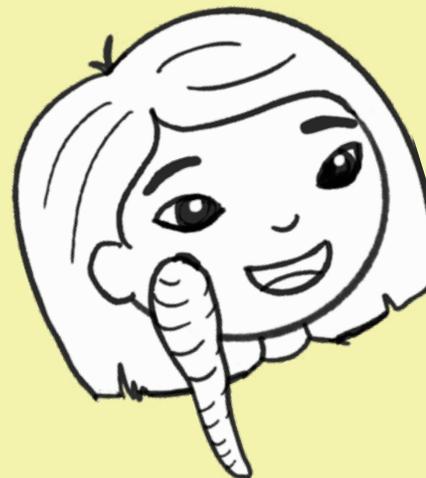
This Firefly leech has gone red - what emotion could that mean?



How is the frog feeling?



How is the moose feeling?



How are YOU feeling?



Follow this link to learn more  
about the Firefly Leech!

*Hirudinea lampyris*

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