

YOUNG EXPLORERS

IT'S BEETLEMANIA!

They live on all continents. They live on land and in water. They live in the driest deserts and the muckiest swamps. They even live on the highest mountains and on remote islands. Beetles are everywhere. In fact, scientists believe that one out of every four animals on Earth is a beetle.

WHAT MAKES A BEETLE A BEETLE?

Like other insects, beetles have three pairs of legs, three body segments (head, thorax, and abdomen), antennae, and wings. But unlike other insects, beetles have special mouthparts made for chewing plants, insects, carrion (dead animals), dung (animal waste), or fungus. Even cooler, they come with their own body armor: a hardened front pair of covered wings that protect the more fragile flying wings folded underneath.

THE LIFE OF A BEETLE

- Similar to a butterfly, beetles go through complete metamorphosis, which means they have four life cycle stages: egg, larval, pupal, and adult.
- Beetles communicate with each other using pheromones (special scents), sounds, vibrations, or light signals (think fireflies).
- The tiniest known beetle in the world is the Fringed Ant Beetle, reaching less than one thousandth of an inch. The largest known beetle, the Titan Beetle, can grow up to seven inches long!
- The strongest known beetle, the Rhinoceros Beetle, can carry 850 times its own weight. That's like a 75-pound kid carrying 14 African Bush Elephants!

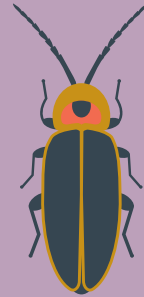
GO ON A BEETLE SCAVENGER HUNT

There are at least 107 known species of beetles in Massachusetts, 30,000 in the United States, and 350,000 around the world. How many beetles can you find? While on the hunt, don't forget to watch how they defend themselves, listen to the sounds they make, and observe how they communicate with each other.

LOOK FOR:

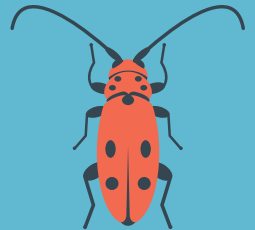
WHIRLIGIG BEETLES

spinning around on a pond's surface while backswimmer beetles and giant water beetles swim underneath.



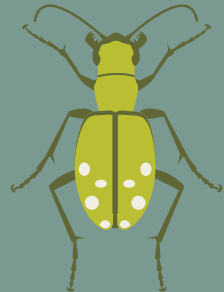
FIREFLIES flashing in grassy areas at night.

RED MILKWEED BEETLES feeding on milkweed leaves and flowers.



ANY BEETLE WITH IRIDESCENT WINGS

(meaning the color changes depending on how you look at it)—there are several species in Massachusetts.



INVASIVE JAPANESE BEETLES

on garden bushes.



LADYBUGS (a.k.a. lady beetles) in the leaf litter, on meadow plants, and on tree trunks.

STAG BEETLES,

with their scary-looking but harmless jaws shaped like antlers.



JUNE BUGS buzzing around lights on a summer night.