



Neil Phillips

# Fairy Shrimp

(*Chirocephalus diaphanus*)

**Description:** Two googly eyes, a long thin body and a long tail which is forked at the tip. Males have a set of fleshy claspers like look a little like an elephant's tusks. Females have an egg sack crammed full of bright orange eggs where the tail meets the body.

**Colour:** Translucent

**Habitat:** Rainwater temporary ponds in grazed areas

**Size:** Up to 30 mm long

**Food:** Algae



To find out more

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They spend their lives suspended in the water, swimming on their backs and using their legs to move food to their mouths. The fairy shrimp has a unique life cycle, with eggs that hatch within 48 hours of rainwater filling the pond.

The eggs are able to live for decades waiting for rain and can hatch at low temperatures. Fairy shrimp were once widespread but have declined to just a few locations because of habitat loss and nutrient enrichment.

