Medina County Park District

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Snow Bugs

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Snow Fleas

Snow fleas are not biting insects but springtails, tiny creatures that spend most of their lives in leaf litter and soil. The size of a flake of pepper, look for them jumping on the snow surface especially on warmer or sunny winter days when they have emerged to feed on algae, pollen, and leaf mold.

Stone Flies

Some stonefly adults emerge in midwinter to mate and lay their eggs back in the water. They can be seen flying slowly through the air in winter but are more often found feeding on the algae growing on rocks and snow at the water's edge.

Diapause

Diapause is the invertebrate version of hibernation. While some invertebrates can tolerate colder temps, they all become inactive for long periods during winter. As adults, they shelter in places like tree cavities or under plant debris under the snow.

Wooly Bears

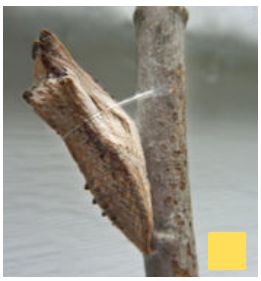
Wooly bear caterpillars are known for their ability to survive being frozen by producing antifreeze-like chemicals in their bodies. They are also more active at cooler temperatures than many insects, and they are occasionally seen crawling across the snow on warmer winter days.

Egg Stage

Some insects overwinter in the egg stage. An undeveloped egg can often survive harsher conditions than an insect in any other stage.

Winter Cutworm

Coming from Europe in the late 1970s, the winter cutworm is an introduced species. Not actually a worm, this caterpillar turns into the large yellow underwing moth. Caterpillars can be found crawling on the snow during a thaw.



Inactive Pupae

Some insects spend the winter as mostly-inactive pupae. (The chrysalis stage in butterflies.) Even though they are not moving, they can be found in crevices in bark, in hollow stems, and under logs and leaf litter on the forest floor.

Spiders

A number of spiders can be spotted on the snow's surface. Not the types to make webs, they stalk and pounce on snow fleas and other tiny snow bugs.

Crane Flies

Even though crane flies look like large mosquitoes, they do not bite. Most varieties are active in summer, but some adults emerge in winter and provide food for our winter songbirds.

Winter Midges

These non-biting midges lay eggs in cool water streams. Larvae feed on algae in the streams and require low temperatures to grow and develop. Adults emerge in fall, winter, or early spring, some living as long as 18 days.