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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | Leech  * Kingdom: Animal * Phylum: Annelida * Class: Clitellata * Order: * Family: * Genus: * Species: |  | |  | | | General Information:  Leeches have been commonly found in the study areas where water is somewhat stagnant. Their numbers significantly increase as water quality decreases. They have typically been very small and had a brownish black color. The leech shown was one of five collected in a kicknet sample.The largest we have ever found has been approximately 8cm. The narrow anterior end is equipped with cutting mouth parts and the large posterior end has a sucker. The sucker is used to attach to their prey (usualy fish) while the cutting mouth parts create a wound so that blood can be drawn. Leeches produce a protein in their saliva (heparin) that prevents the preys wound from forming a clot. A synthetic version of this is used during surgeries to prevent clot formation. They move by undulations of the body in a "S" shape manner. [Movie of a leech swimming](http://docs.google.com/images/leech.mov). | | |  | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | | Copyright © 2008 Amador Valley High. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without express written permission of Amador Valley is prohibited. | |