

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Natural Resource Stewardship & Science  
Air Resources Division



**Come  
Explore  
With  
Us!**

## **Become a Dragonfly Mercury Scientist**

Meet the dragonfly before it flies! Grab rubber boots and a sampling net and join park rangers as we search for juvenile dragonflies. These amazing organisms live in the water and are teaching us about the health of park wildlife. Specifically, we are learning how mercury affects food webs. Experience the hidden aquatic underworld!





**What gets you excited?! Dragonflies? Science? Getting wet?**

### **Dragonfly Mercury Project**

As part of the Dragonfly Mercury Project, citizen scientists - like YOU! - can help collect dragonfly larvae from national parks for mercury analysis. Be 1 of 2,500 citizen scientists participating! Mercury often enters parks as air pollution from distant, human-caused, sources, like coal-burning power plants. Natural sources, such as volcanoes, can also emit mercury.

Dragonfly larvae build up higher levels of mercury than other types of water-dwelling insects because:

1. They are predators that eat a lot of smaller insects, making them high on the food chain.
2. They can live up to 5 to 7 years underwater as a larva, eating and accumulating mercury as they grow.

### **People like YOU make this study possible!**

Laboratories at the US Geological Survey, University of Maine, and Dartmouth College analyze the dragonfly larvae collected in parks for mercury and report the results. This helps us understand mercury risk across the national parks. Over 60 national parks and loads of students, teachers, families, Girl Scouts, etc., have been involved to date. Join us! We'd love to have you help us!!

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#### **Learn More:**

[http://www.nature.nps.gov/air/studies/air\\_toxics/dragonfly/index.cfm](http://www.nature.nps.gov/air/studies/air_toxics/dragonfly/index.cfm)

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