

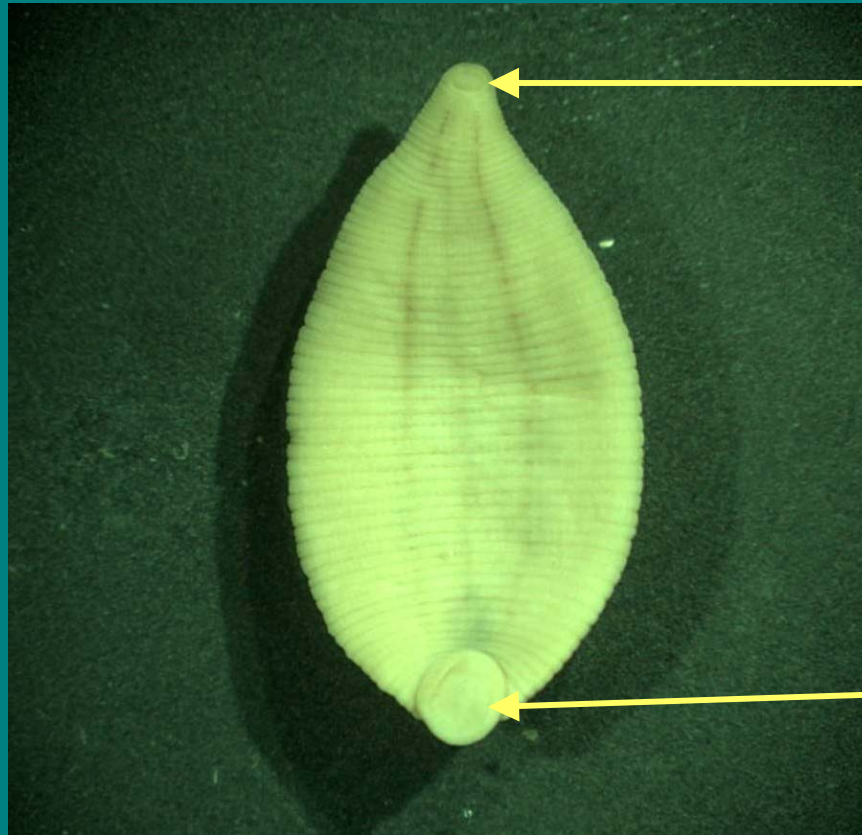
Leeches: Class Hirudinea



Notable Body Characteristics

Segmented body

No hard head capsule



Sucker at head end

Sucker at the rear
larger than the front
sucker

Sucker at rear end

Distinguishing Leeches by Body Shape



Family: Glossiphonidae

Body pear shaped

Generally smaller than other leech families



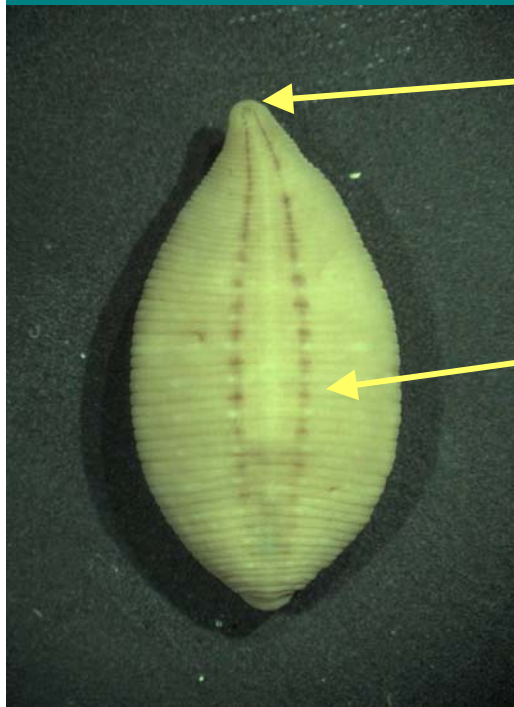
Families: Erpobdellidae and Hirudinidae

Body elongated

Generally larger than Glossiphonidae

Distinguishing Among Glossiphonidae

Key Features



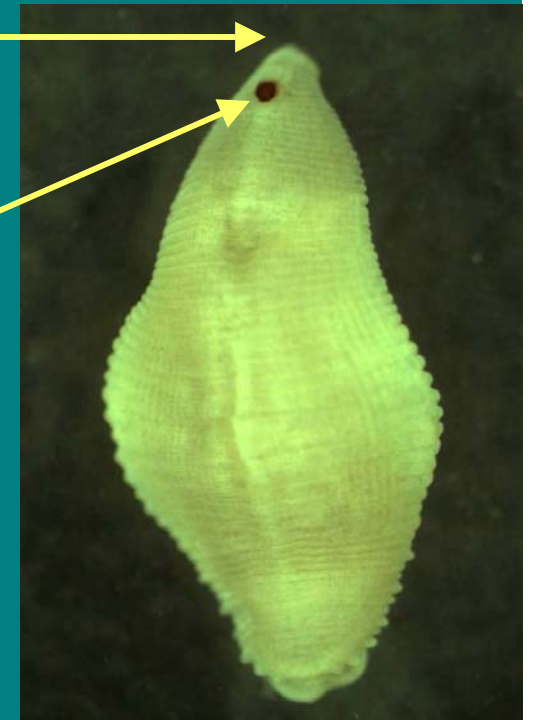
Eyes

(1-4 pairs)

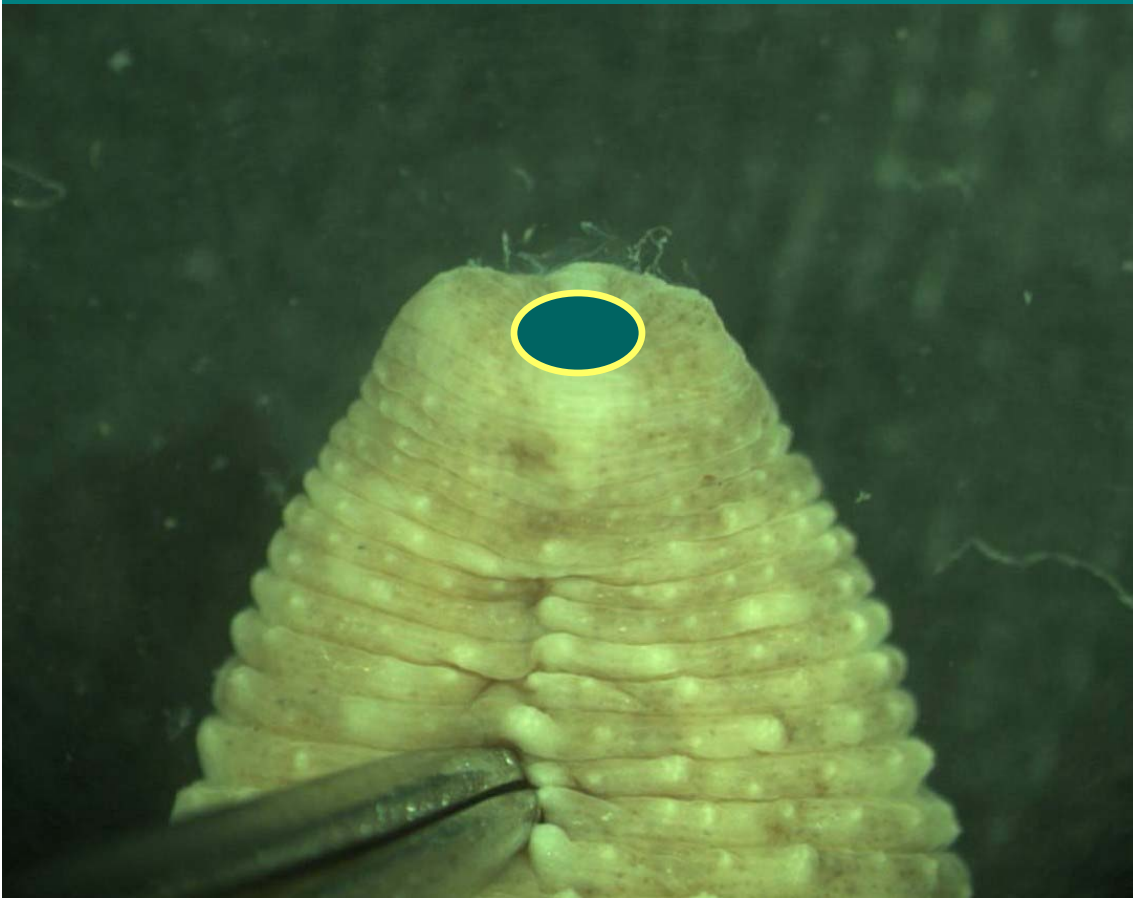
Body Patterns

(Stripes, Spot, Papillae)

Length



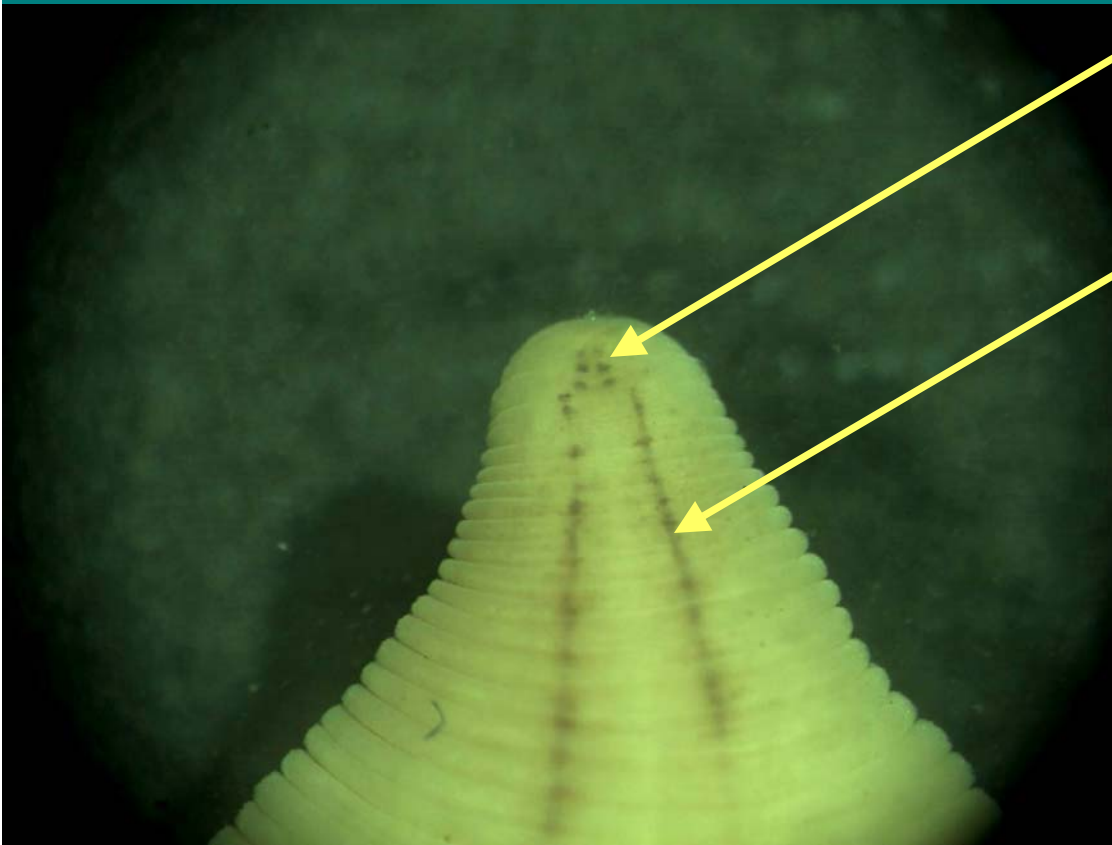
Finding Eyes in Glossiphonids



Eyes may disappear between folds of body segments. Using forceps, press down on top of head to view under a microscope. Look for 1-4 pairs.

Example 1

Glossiphonia



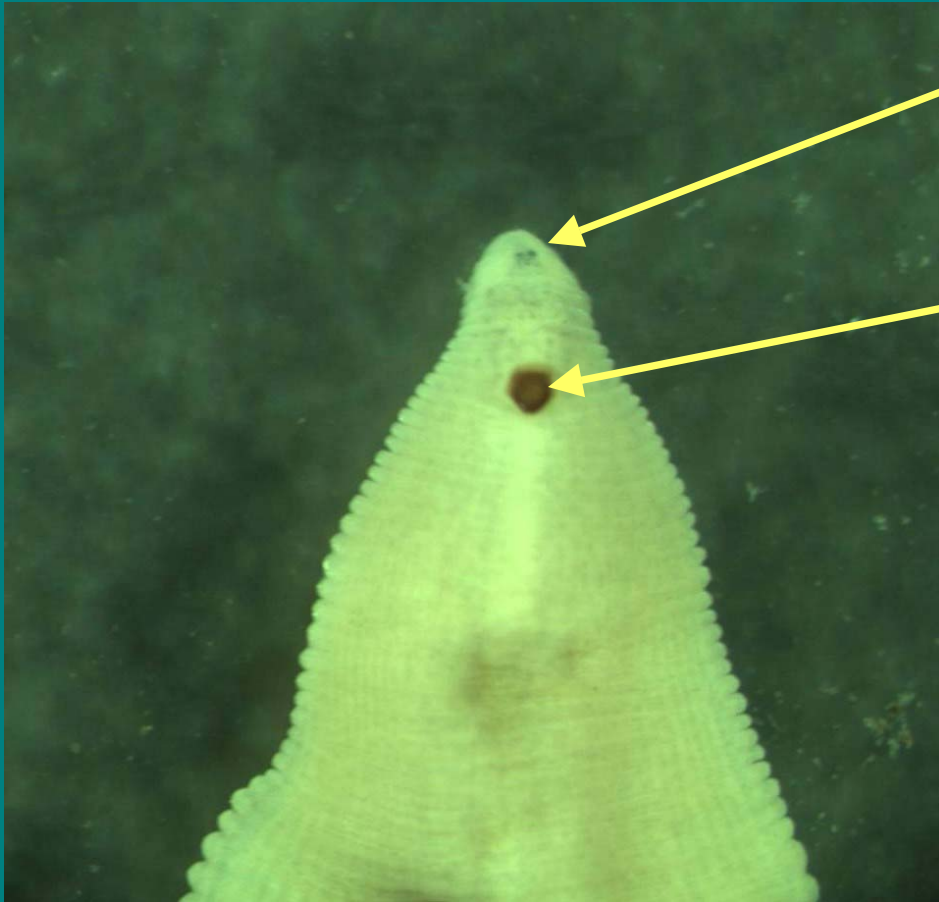
Eyes: 3 pairs

Body Pattern: Pigmented stripes

Length: Less than 20mm

Example 2

Helobdella stagnalis



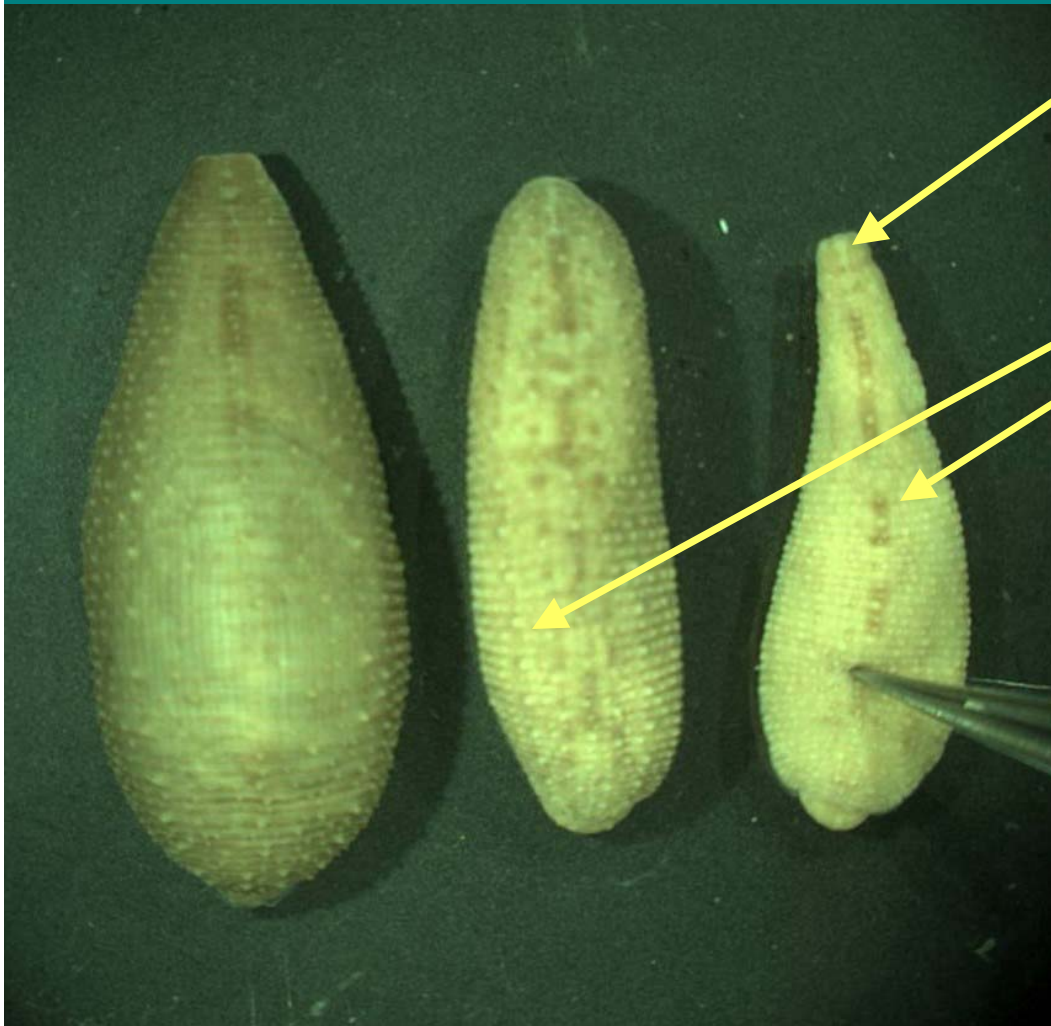
Eyes: 1 pair

Body Pattern: Dark patch near head

Length: 9-14mm

Example 3

Placobdella ornata



Eyes: 1 Pair

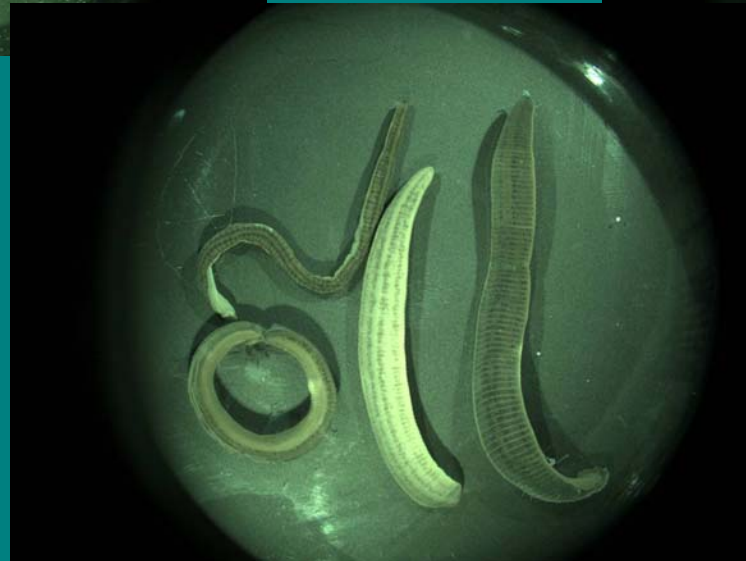
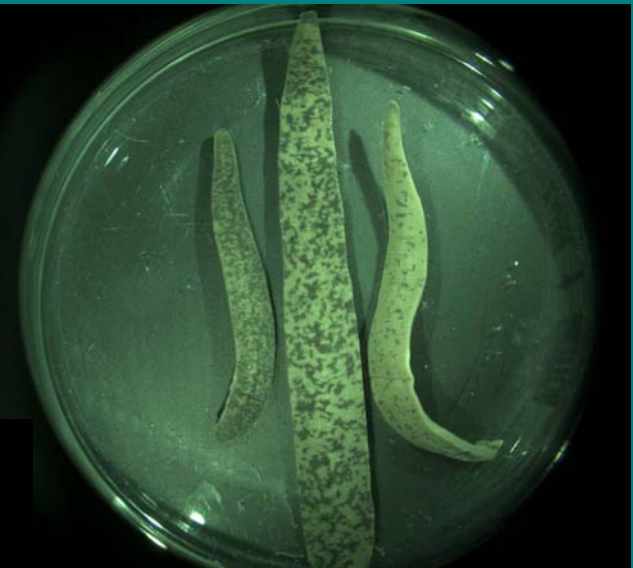
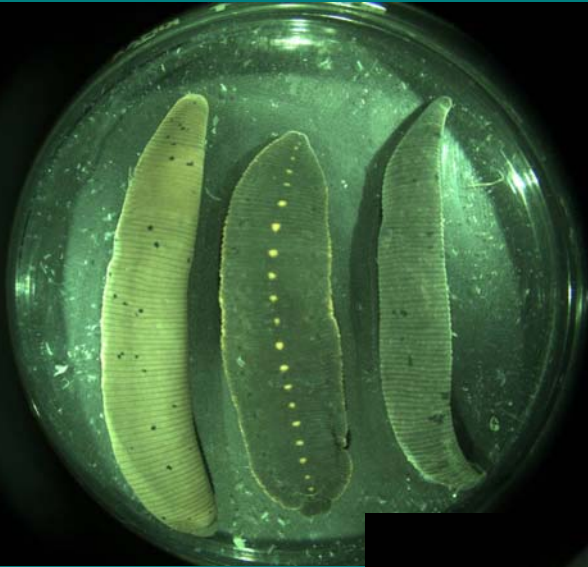
Body Pattern: Decorated with papillae, pigmented pattern on back

Length: 2-4 cm

Other Glossiphonidae

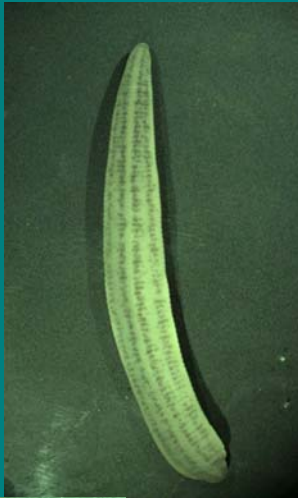
This is a variable family of leeches. You may find other Glossiphonidae than those in the examples. Record as many different kinds as you observe. Use distinguishing characteristics to identify as many different genera or species as possible.

Families Erpobdellidae and Hirudinidae

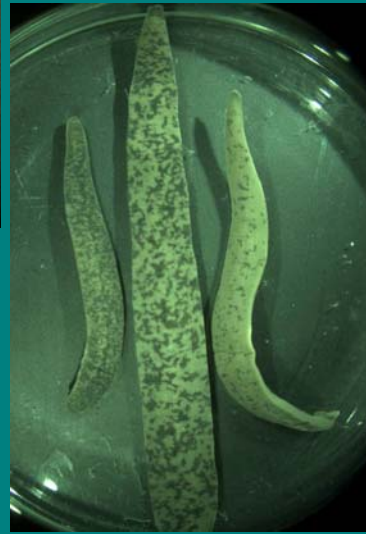


Identifying Characteristics

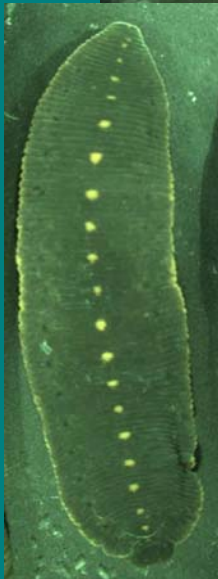
smallest



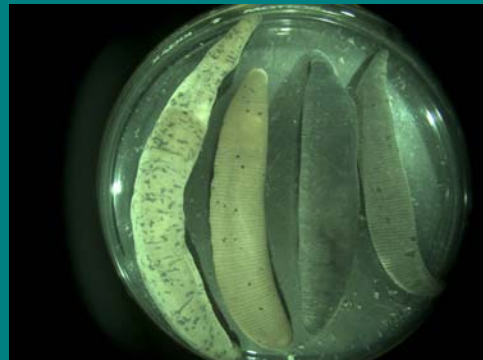
Erpobdella punctata



Nephelopsis



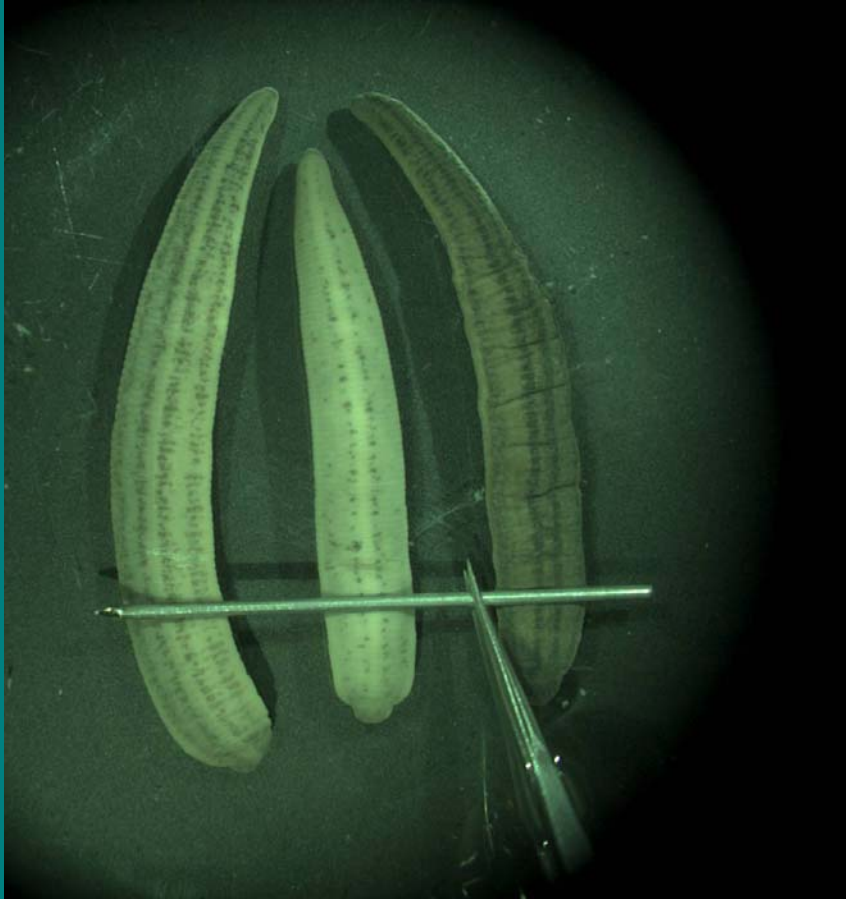
Macrobdella decora



Haemopsis grandis

Largest

Erpobdella Punctata



Body coloration varies from dark to light.

Body is wormlike with patterns of lines on the back of the leech.

In dark erpobdella the color pattern may not be visible.

Color pattern is always darker than the body of the leech.

Length 1-3 inches preserved
(2-4 inches alive)

Nephelopsis

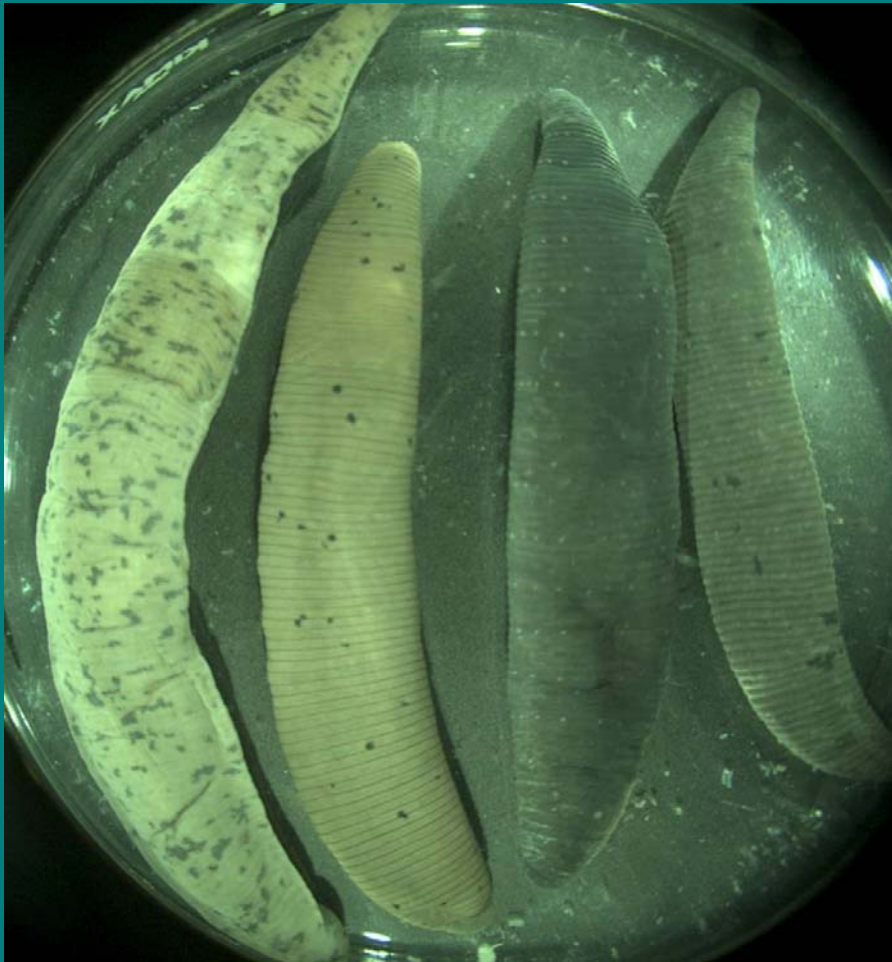


Body coloration is mottled and irregular some Nephelopsis may be so mottled that they appear totally dark

Body shape is ribbon like

Length: 1-4 inches preserved
(2-5 inches alive)

Haemopsis Grandis

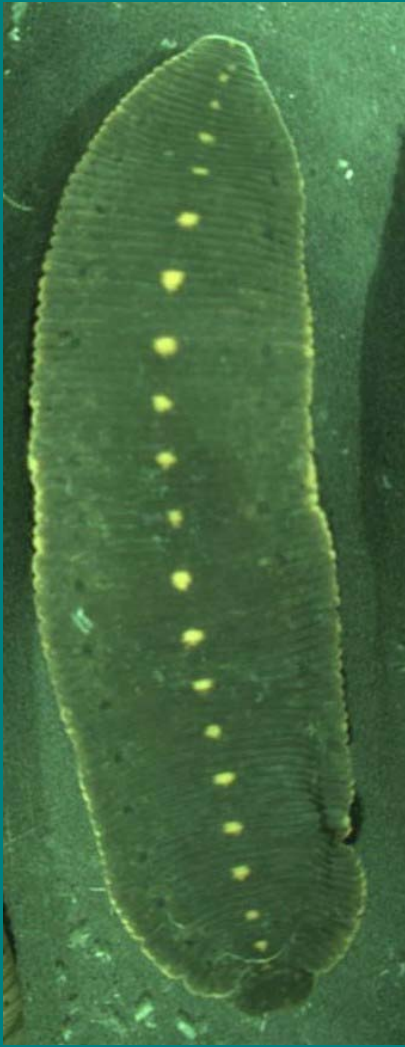


Ribbonlike leeches much thicker than the other leeches

Length: 3-4 inches when preserved
(5-10 inches alive)

Irregular mottled coloration

Macrobdella Decora



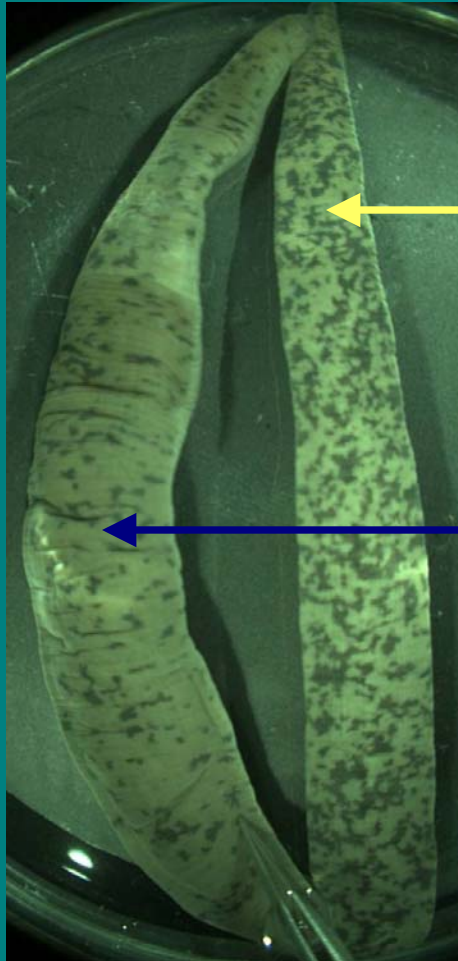
Ribbonlike body shape

Length 2-3 inches preserved (4-7 inches alive)

Regular pattern of coloration which is lighter than the rest of the body.

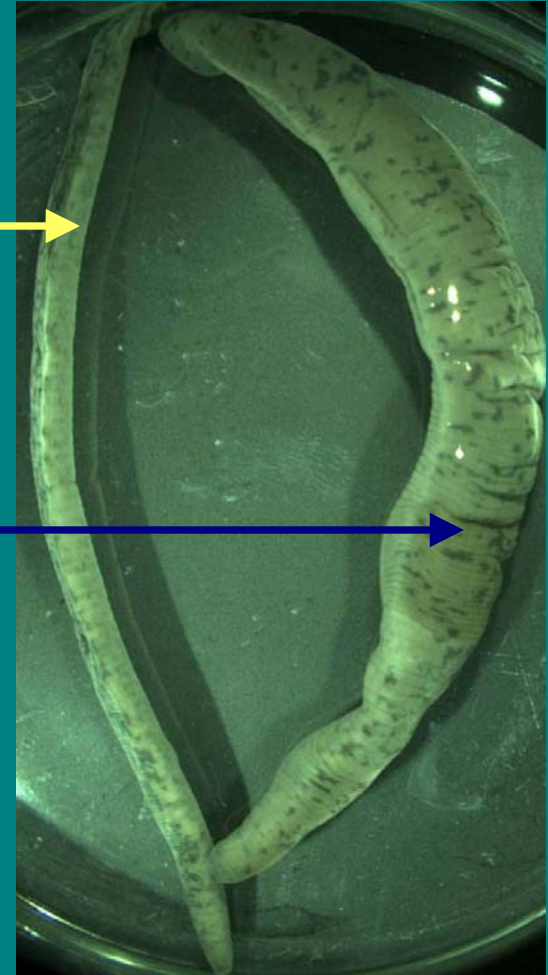
Underside of leech lighter in color than the dorsal side

Nephelopsis vs. Haemopsis



Nephelopsis

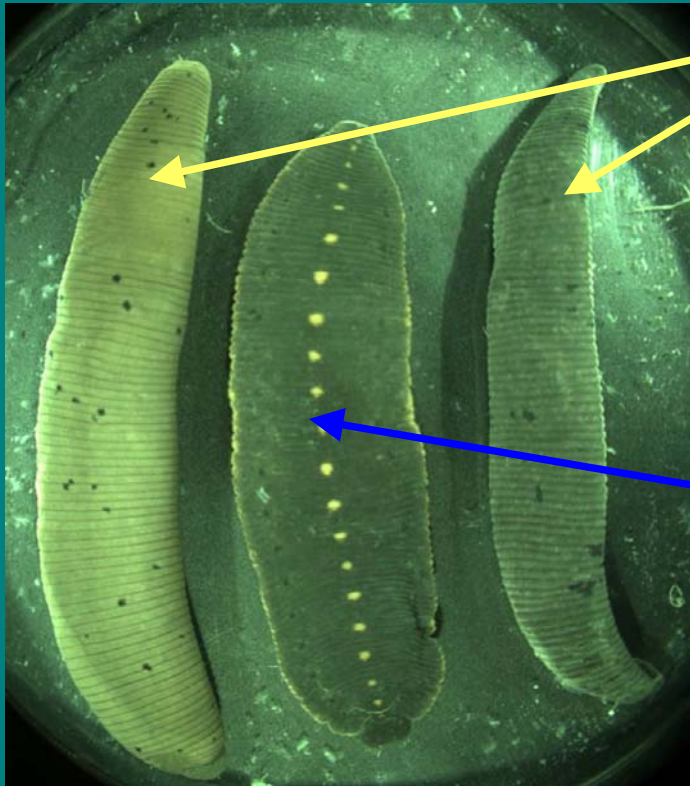
Thin bodied slightly smaller leech



Haemopsis

Heavy bodied leech thicker and larger than Nephelopsis

Haemopsis vs. Macrobdella



Haemopsis

Color is uniform from top to bottom with irregularly spaced color patterns. Body is heavier and larger

Macrobdella

Color is dark on top and light on bottom with a thinner smaller body

