

Forensic Entomology - What the blowfly Saw

<http://tlc.ousd.k12.ca.us/~acody/forensic.html>



Read the following paragraph. Then fill in the table indicating when the three insects arrive or leave the body. Then write a paragraph explaining when the Marine died, and how you know.






The decomposed corpse of a Marine is found in a rain forest just off the highway in Oahu, Hawaii. By the time entomologist Lee Goff arrived most of the blowflies had come and gone, but many other insects were busy with the body.

Goff said, “We had clerid beetles and hide beetles, both of which like their bodies slightly dried. I also found the body of a rove beetle – it arrives early, but you don’t see the larvae until a couple of weeks into decomposition.

Then I had a hairy maggot blowfly; this was neat because it takes at least 17 days to emerge, and all I had were empty puparia (shells of pupae).”

Goff also found cheese skippers, flies that arrive no later than a week after death. “After a month (cheese skippers) pop off the corpse to pupate on the soil. So the fact that I find larvae means we are under 34 days.”

Finally, Goff found soldier flies. “This one’s pretty definitive for my time estimate because they let the body age for about 20 days before coming in. And the ones I collected were fifth instars, between 9 and 11 days old.”

Type of Insect	When they arrive/leave	What they prove
Hairy maggot  blowflies		
 Cheese Skipper		
 Soldier flies		

Now put the information together. Write a paragraph (using complete sentences) that states how long ago the Marine died and how you know.