

Blowfly Introduction

The blow fly lays its eggs on dead animals to provide food for its carnivorous larvae as they hatch. This means that in nature, the life cycle of the blow fly is part of the decomposition process of dead bodies. The study of this phenomenon by *entomologists* has led to our ability to estimate the time since death by examining which stage of growth the blow fly is in when found on the cadaver. The *forensic entomologist* conducts examinations at crime scenes and examines the insect evidence found there to bring evidence to court cases involving human cadavers. To make a determination, the scientist makes visual observations, collects insect evidence, determines the stages of development, and calculates the time of initial deposit of the blow fly eggs on the cadaver. In the laboratory the scientist rears collected specimens to confirm the species and more accurately establish the stage of growth. They then compile their findings and make a "best guess estimate" as to how long the cadaver has been dead.