

# Net-Spinning Caddisfly Larvae

## Fact Sheet

**Order:** *Trichoptera*

**Family:** *Hydropsychidae*

**Number of species in North America:** 149

**Size:** 10–16 mm

**Facts:**

- Usually captured clinging to rocks and vegetation.
- Builds mesh net for filter feeding—quickly abandon when disturbed.

**Diet:** Collector-feeders; construct mesh net to remove particles from water.

**Food for:** Game fish, predaceous water insects.

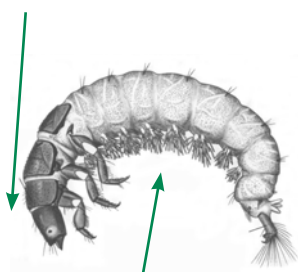
**Habitat:** Flowing waters, usually between rocks or submerged debris.

**Movement:** Clingers; live in tubular retreats attached to solid objects in current.

**Breathing:** Closed breathing system; diffusion over soft body tissue.

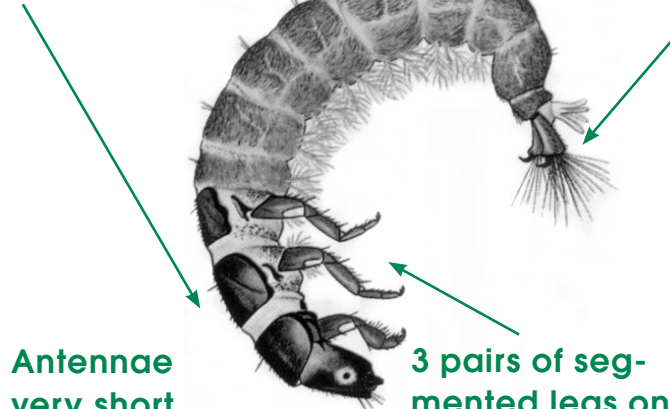
**Water Quality Indicator:** Group II—can exist under a wide range of water quality conditions; a large number indicates *moderate* water quality.

Thick, hardened skin on head.



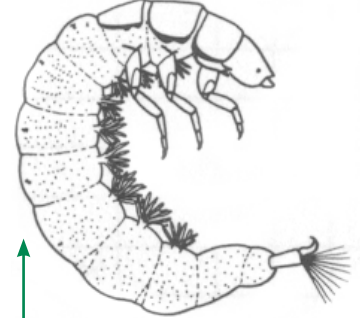
Abdomen is made of thin, soft skin.

No wing pads on thorax.

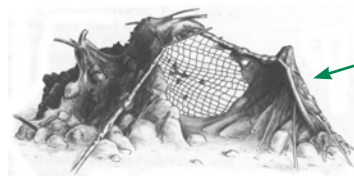


Antennae very short, barely visible.

1 pair of prolegs with 1 claw on each.



When removed from water, larvae lay on side in C-shape.



Uses silk to secure retreat.



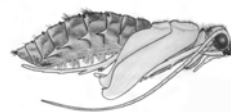
## Life Cycle Corner

### Complete Metamorphosis

Eggs are deposited near the shore.



5 larval instars—the pupal stage takes place in a sealed cocoon (fixed to an object).



Three weeks later, the caddisfly emerges as an adult.

Images: McCafferty, W. Patrick. *Aquatic Entomology*, 1981.



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