

# Dragonfly Nymph

Fact Sheet

**Order:** *Odonata*

**Family:** *Aeshnidae*—Darners; *Gomphidae*—Clubtails; *Libellulidae*—Common Skimmers

**Number of species in North America:** 243

**Size:** Darners: 45 mm (larvae), 79 mm (adult); Clubtails: 30 mm (larvae), 50 mm (adult); Common Skimmers: 21 mm (larvae), 50 mm (adult)

**Similar to:** Damselfly

- A dragonfly's head is narrower than thorax and abdomen, while a damselfly's head is wider.

**Diet:** Insects (and larvae), other dragonfly nymphs, worms, small crustaceans. Will go af-

ter movement and even stalk prey.

**Food for:** Gamefish, frogs, birds, beetles, other dragonflies.

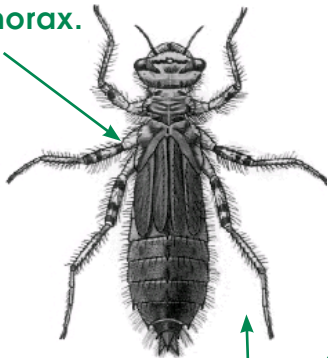
**Habitat:** Ponds, marshes, lake edges, shallow streams, slow streams and rivers

**Movement:** Climb and crawl on bottom. Some burrow. Can propel through water by sending water out their rear (rectal chamber).

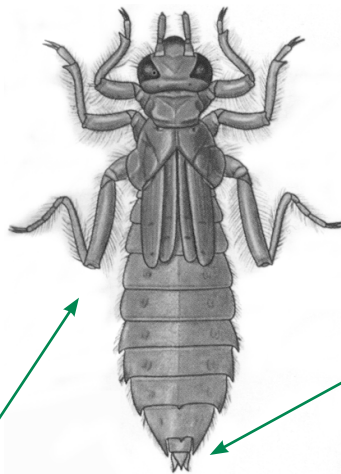
**Breathing:** Through gill folds on rear area of body, and thin-walled body regions.

**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 and thorax; 2 pairs of wing pads on thorax.



COMMON SKIMMER DRAGONFLY NYMPH

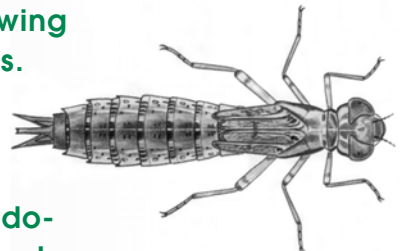


CLUBTAIL DRAGONFLY NYMPH

Scooplike lip (called labium) to capture food. Large chewing mouthparts.



No tail. Abdomen terminates with 3 stubby wedgeshaped structures.



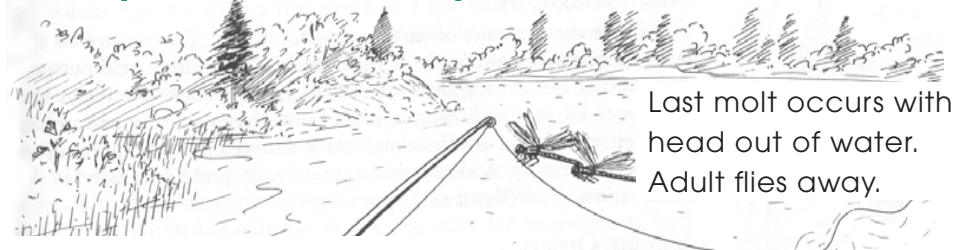
DARNER NYMPH AND ADULT



3 pairs of segmented legs extend from thorax. 2 claws at the end of each leg.

## Life Cycle Corner

### Incomplete Metamorphosis



Eggs deposited onto plant leaves/stems underwater. Sometimes eggs are just laid in shallow water.

Last molt occurs with head out of water. Adult flies away.

Nymph hatches and molts 12 times.

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



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