

# Net-spinning Caddisfly Larvae

Order: Trichoptera Family: Hydropsychidae

Number of species in North America: 149



CREEK CONNECTIONS,  
Allegheny College

Size: 10-16mm



No wing pads on thorax

Usually captured clinging to rocks and vegetation

Thick, hardened skin on head

1 pair of prolegs with 1 claw on each

3 pair of segmented legs on thorax

COMMON NETSPINNER

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

Antennae very short, barely visible

Build mesh net for filter feeding—quickly abandon when disturbed

Abdomen is made of thin, soft skin

Use silk to secure retreat

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

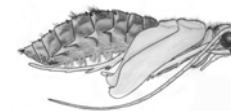
## Life Cycle Corner

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.

**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.