

# Dobsonfly Larvae

Order: *Megaloptera* Family: *Corydalidae*

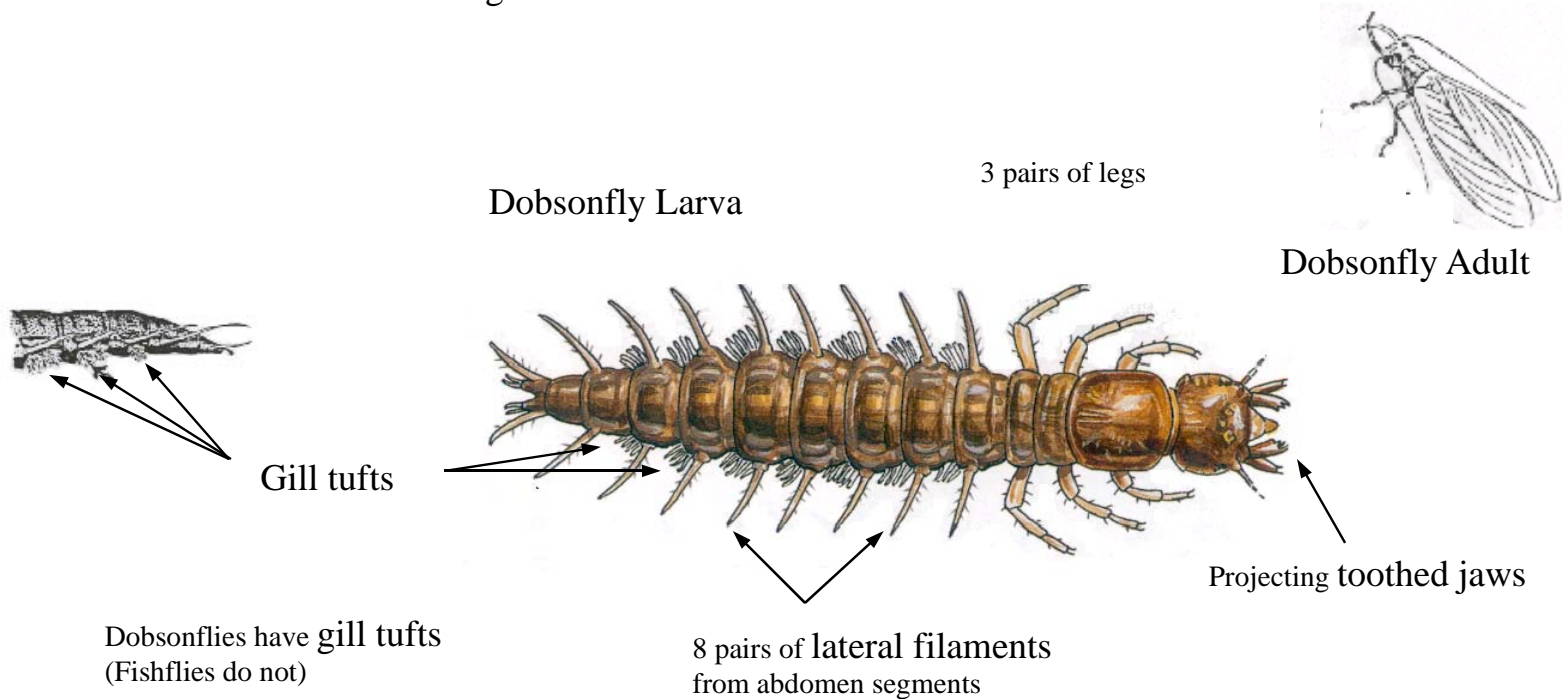
Number of species in North America: 4



CREEK CONNECTIONS,  
Allegheny College

Size: 25-90mm (mature larvae)

Dobsonflies are also known as: Hellgrammites



Dobsonflies have gill tufts  
(Fishflies do not)

*Credits: McCafferty, W. Patrick. Aquatic Entomology, 1981.  
and  
Voshell, J. Reese Jr. A Guide to Freshwater Invertebrates of  
North America, 2002.*

## Life Cycle Corner

**Complete metamorphosis**

Egg masses are found out of water on plants, bridges, and rocks.

Egg mass has layers.

After one week larva drop into water.

Adults emerge in the summer and live only a few days

Prepupa emerge from the water onto bank soil forming the pupa then the adult over a two week period.

Larvae live one to three years, usually going through 10-12 molts.

**Diet:** Insects (especially Caddisflies and Black Flies) aquatic worms, crustaceans, mollusks, other Dobsonflies and Fishflies

**Food for:** Fish, predaceous beetles, other Dobsonflies and Fishflies

**Habitat:** Bottom dweller in streams and rivers, in all kinds of bottoms and currents. Some live in ponds and lakes. Dobsonflies can even be found in the moist substrate of dried streams.

**Movement:** Swim, crawl, cling, Active at night.

**Breathing:** Breath through gills.

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