Caddisflies

Freshwater silk-spinners | *Order Trichoptera* (Kirby, 1813)



UNDERWATER ARCHITECTS

Silk builders *of the stream*

In British Columbia's salmon streams, some caddisfly larvae bind pebbles and leaves with silk to make portable shelters. Their moth-like adults emerge from the water and feed birds along the forested banks.

SEASONAL CYCLE

Most spend much of their lives as aquatic larvae. Adults often emerge at dusk; timing varies by species.

FRESHWATER HABITAT

Across BC, larvae inhabit streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands, often among submerged stones or plant debris.

STREAM STEWARDSHIP

Keeping streams shaded and reducing excess sediment helps protect caddisfly habitat and the freshwater food webs that support salmon.

FIELD NOTES

RECOGNIZE IT

Adults have long, thread-like antennae and fine-haired wings folded like a tent. Some larvae carry cases made of pebbles, sand or plant pieces.

BUILT WITH SILK

Some larvae build portable shelters with underwater silk. Others spin nets that catch tiny food particles carried by the current.

FOOD FOR SALMON

Young coho, Chinook and steelhead eat caddisfly larvae, pupae and adults. Caddisflies also help scientists assess stream health.

Sources: E-Fauna BC; Royal BC Museum (2007); BC CABIN; Sheffield et al. (2019)