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Vernal Pool Creature

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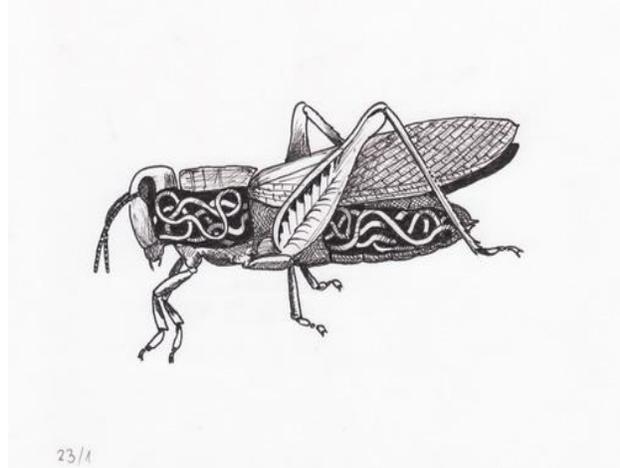
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Vernal Pool Creature By Charlie D.

On April 25 at around 12:25pm, I was walking on the trail near the school when we found the vernal pool. When we visited the pool we found a horsehair worm. It is brown and about 4 inches long. I wonder what other species it is related to? Is it invasive or not? And how does it reproduce?

In an article I read, horsehair worms are parasites that do not infect people but in the water they will host on to insects and animals. It reproduces by laying eggs in hosts that are diurnal. They can live on the ground and on plants near water. When we saw the horsehair worm it looked like long brown horse hair. The horsehair worm will infect the host's brain and hitch a ride to water. There are 350 different species of horsehair worms! Females lay eggs inside the insect and hatch, eating the flesh of its



host, and developing further into different forms.

The horsehair worm is a parasite that lives in other organisms. Since it needs to live in water, it is commonly found in streams, rivers, and even vernal pools! We saw other insects in the vernal pool like the caddisfly that it could possibly infect. I wonder if the horsehair worm could infect the spotted salamanders that also go to the vernal pool, or even their eggs and developing embryos?



Citation

Quiros, G. Feb 12, 2019. These Hairworms Eat a Cricket Alive and Control Its Mind.
<https://www.kqed.org/science/1937775/these-hairworms-eat-a-cricket-alive-and-control-its-mind>