



Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.

water scorpion

representative species

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Arthropoda
Class:	Insecta
Order:	Hemiptera
Family:	Nepidae

Features

Water scorpions undergo incomplete metamorphosis (egg, nymph, adult). Their body shape is slender, resembling a stick. They grow to about 1 1/2 inches long as an adult. They hang upside down at the water's surface and use a long tube from the tip of the abdomen to obtain oxygen. The mouthparts are for piercing and sucking. The front legs are adapted for grabbing prey items. The front wings are hard at the base and membranous (thin, pliable) at the tip. The hind wings are membranous and shorter than the front wings.

Natural History

Water scorpions live in ponds and streams. They are predators of other insects. Eggs are deposited in the tissues of aquatic plants. These insects can inflict a painful bite if handled.