



## water strider

representative species

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Kingdom:         | Animalia   |
| Division/Phylum: | Arthropoda |
| Class:           | Insecta    |
| Order:           | Hemiptera  |
| Family:          | Gerridae   |

### Features

Water striders undergo incomplete metamorphosis (egg, nymph, adult). The adult is long and slender with short front legs and long middle and rear legs. The middle legs are closer to the hind legs than to the front legs. These insects breathe with spiracles and have piercing and sucking mouthparts. Their 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. Adults may be three-fourths inch or longer.

### Natural History

Water striders live in ponds and streams. They eat other insects. Water striders “skate” across the water’s surface with the aid of a water repellent wax on their feet. They locate prey and a mate by sensing vibrations with the feet.

### 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.