



three feet per second. They give off a foul odor as a protective device when disturbed. The larva pupates at the edge of the water body. The larva is a predator, while the adult may be a predator or a scavenger.

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.

whirligig beetle

representative species

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Insecta
Order: Coleoptera
Family: Gyrinidae

Features

Whirligig beetles undergo complete metamorphosis (egg, larva, pupa, adult). The larva is long, slender, and pale with three pairs of segmented legs and long filaments extending from the sides of the abdomen. The end of the larval abdomen has two pairs of sickle-shaped hooks. The adult has two pairs of compound eyes. One pair sees below the water's surface and one pair sees above. The adult is a shiny black, oval-shaped beetle whose abdomen projects beyond the front wings. It is about one-half inch long. The front wings are hard and meet in a straight line down the middle of the back when not in flight. The hind wings are membranous (thin, pliable) and folded under the front wings when not in flight. The adult front legs are long and slender, while the middle and rear legs are very short and flattened.

Natural History

Whirligig beetles live in ponds, streams, and lakes. Adults swim on the surface film of water in groups of their own species. Adult may move at speeds of up to