



Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

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

water mites

representative species

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Arachnida
Order: Acarina

Features

Water mites usually are less than one-quarter inch long. The head is tiny and the body is sac-like. The mouthparts are for piercing and sucking. They can be a variety of colors from red to green, to black, to yellow.

Natural History

Mites may be scavengers, predators, or parasites. Females deposit eggs which hatch into six-legged larvae. The larvae molts into an eight-legged nymph that molts into an adult. They live with other floating plankton (microscopic organisms) or in wet vegetation along the shore. Some swim; others crawl about plants and rocks. All must surface to get air.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; temporary water supplies; wet prairies and fens; bottomland forests