

Waterstrider

Order: Hemiptera Family: Gerridae

Number of species in North America: 47

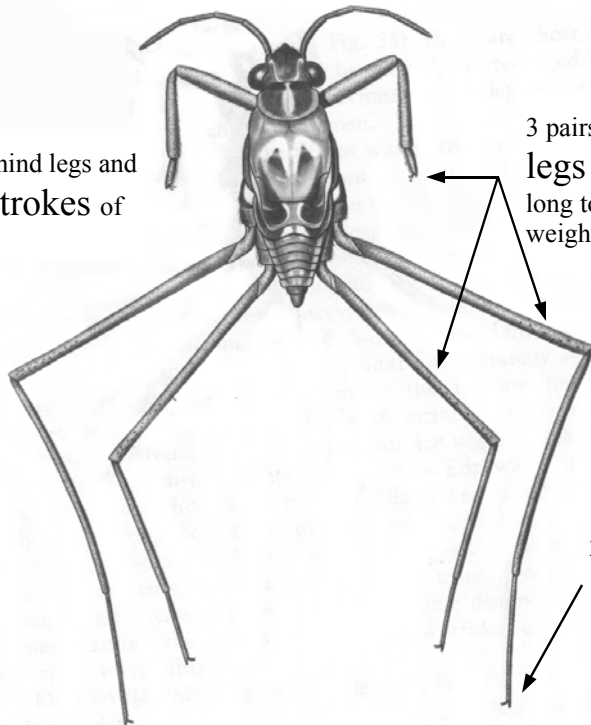


CREEK CONNECTIONS,
Allegheny College

Size: 3-20mm (adult)

Also called pond skaters
or Jesus bugs because they
seem to “walk on water”

Steer with hind legs and
unequal strokes of
middle legs

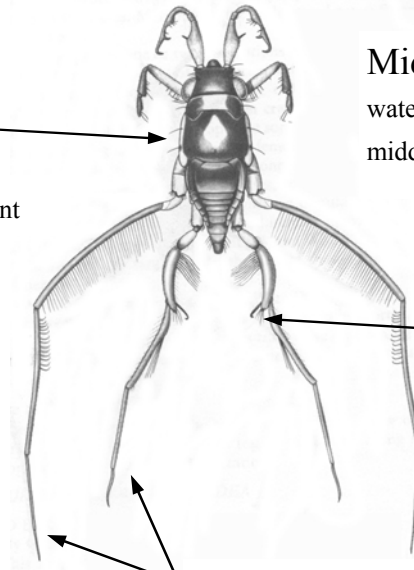


Wing pads present on thorax

No gills present

3 pairs of segmented
legs on thorax, skinny and
long to help distribute body
weight on water surface.

2 claws on segmented legs



Middle and hind legs touch
water– front legs are held up while
middle legs row

Claws on upper
leg– do not break surface
tension

Ends of legs have non-wettable hairs

*Credits: McCafferty, W. Patrick. Aquatic
Entomology, 1981.*

Diet: Terrestrial and aquatic insects (living and dead).
Food for: Game fish, predaceous water insects.
Habitat: Surface of streams, lakes, ponds, marshes, and ditches.
Movement: Skate on surface of water.
Breathing: Openings in sides of bodies (spiracles). When diving, a thin layer of air is trapped on the unwettable hairs covering body.
Water Quality Indicator: Group II– can exist under a wide range of water quality conditions; a large number indicates MODERATE water quality.

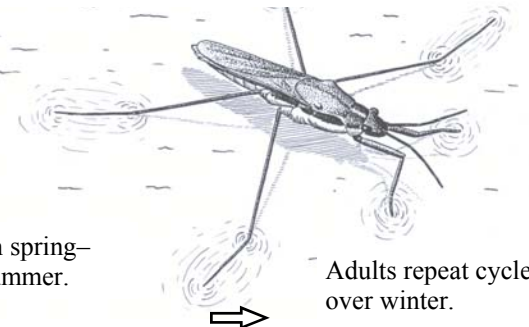
Life Cycle Corner

Incomplete metamorphosis

Loose eggs usually deposited
underwater. Attached to
solid objects.



Adults lay eggs in spring–
develop during summer.



Adults repeat cycle
over winter.