

# Nepidae

## Water Scorpion

Native to Maine

Freshwater

### Larval Form

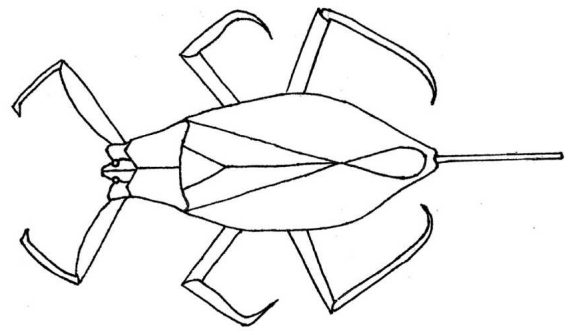


Biopix



Look for an aquatic insect with three pairs of legs. The first pair of legs are grasping forelegs for seizing prey. The water scorpion has a beak-like head with sucking mouthparts.

### Larva Illustration



R. Martin



Water scorpion nymphs look like small versions of the adult. Nymphs breathe through six pairs of abdominal spiracles (small openings on the surface of the insect's body).

### Variations and Details

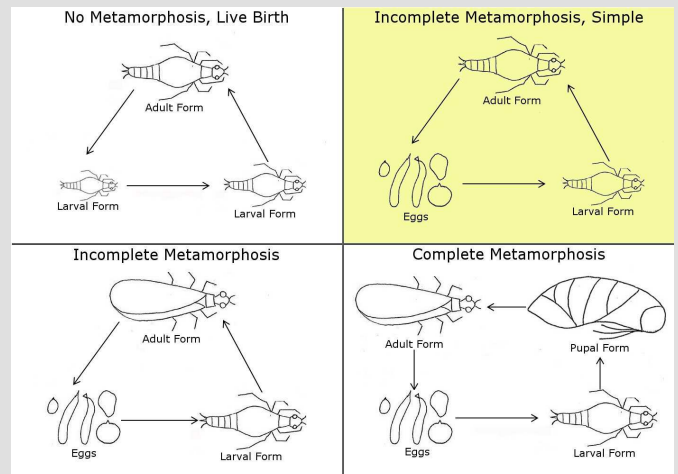


helixblue and Valter Jacinto, flickr and Biopix

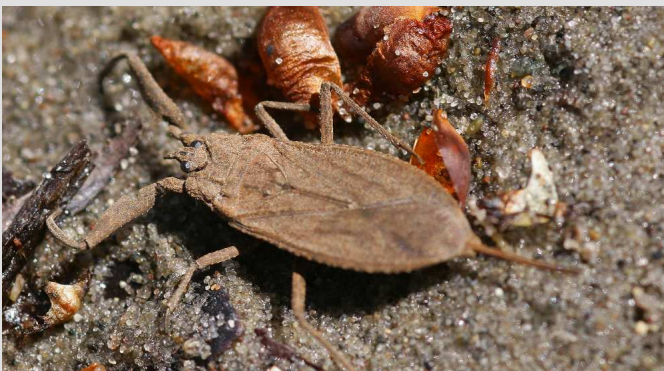


Some species of water scorpions are long and thin. These species are sometimes called water stick insects. Other species are wider and may resemble dead leaves.

### Life Cycle Diagram



### Adult Form



sankax, flickr



Adult water scorpions can grow to 5 cm and breathe through snorkel-like tubes on the rear of their abdomen. Adults may fly on warm days, and the area beneath their wings is red.

### Similar Species

Water scorpions were named because people thought they looked like a scorpion. The grasping front legs of the water scorpions may look similar to the pincers of scorpions. A water scorpion's breathing tube may also remind people of a scorpion's stinging tail.

### Fun Fact

Water scorpions are ambush predators and eat other insects, small fish, and worms. They catch prey with their front legs and pierce it with their beak. Digestive enzymes are inserted into the prey and partially digested tissues are sucked out.

### Tolerant of Pollution



Gulf of Maine  
Research Institute



[www.vitalsignsme.org](http://www.vitalsignsme.org)

Researched and created by: Rebecca Martin

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