

Water Scorpion

Order: Hemiptera

Family: Nepidae

Number of species: 149



Size: 25-50mm

Usually captured clinging to vegetation near surface

Genus NEPA

Genus RANATRA

2 pair of segmented legs on thorax used for grasping vegetation

Front pair have jack-knife design to catch and secure prey

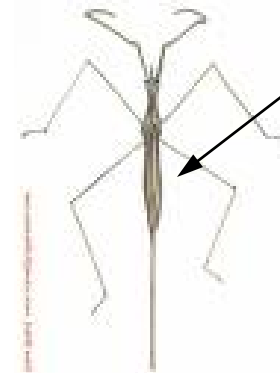
Beaklike rostrum on head is used to inject digestive proteins into prey



Caudal siphon or breathing tube

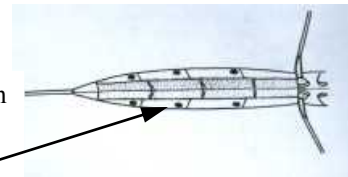
Hang on vegetation waiting for prey then swings out and grabs it as it swims by

Thick, hardened front wing adapted into protective covering and used to trap air under and protect the wings underneath



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

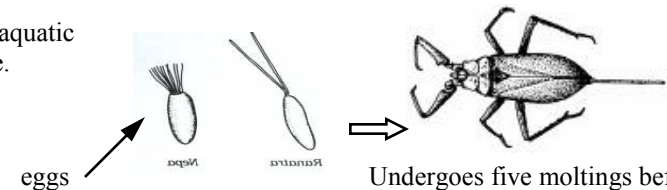
Black spots cover air sacs which let the insect determine how deep it is in the water



Life Cycle Corner

Do not undergo metamorphosis

Eggs are deposited on aquatic vegetation near surface.



Undergoes five moltings before reaching maturity. Looks the same throughout life cycle.

Diet: predators. Eat nymphs and other aquatic insects
Food for: Game fish
Habitat: still or slow moving waters in ponds and streams near surface.
Movement: Floaters; live in aquatic vegetation waiting for prey to pass by just below the surface
Breathing: breathe air through caudal siphon when at surface and uses air sac when submerged.
Water Quality Indicator: Group II- can exist under a wide range of water quality conditions; a large number indicates MODERATE water quality.