



The water strider (also known as the pond skater) is a true bug that can run across the surface of water. It lives on [ponds](#) and slow-running streams. It rarely goes underwater. The underside of the body is covered with water-repellent hair.

**Anatomy:** Like all insects, the water striders have a three-part body (head, thorax and abdomen), six jointed legs, and two antennae. It has a long, dark, narrow body. Some water striders have wings, others do not. Most water striders are over 0.2 inch (5 mm) long.

**The Legs:** The long, middle legs move this bug across the surface on the water like paddles. The long hind legs steer them and act as brakes. The short front legs are used to catch prey.

**Diet and Predators:** Water striders eat small insects that fall on the water's surface and also **larvae** (immature insects). Water striders are very sensitive to motion and vibrations on the water's surface. It uses this ability in order to locate prey. It pushes its mouth into its prey and sucks the insect dry. Water striders do not bite people. Predators of the water strider, like birds and fish, take advantage of the fact that water striders cannot detect motion above or below the water's surface.