



Small Worlds Around Us

By Lynn W. Watkins

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Here's Insect That Skates Over Surface of Water

They look for all the world like a group of crazy spiders skating on the surface of the pond. However, if you are quick enough to catch one of the agile little creatures you will notice it has only six legs, while a spider has eight. This is a "water-strider" and the name fits for they actually do walk on the water. They skate over the surface like boys skating on ice.

While we are holding the little fellow, being careful he doesn't bite, we see his underside is silvery white. An enemy, looking up from the deep pond water, has trouble locating the strider, his white under surface more or less matches the light above.

Brown on Top

The upper part of the elongated body is dark brown, which from above resembles somewhat the dark water. The eyes are large. There is a pair of elongated forelegs, suitable for grasping insects on which the strider feeds. The rear legs are long, they are mostly used as steering oars, while the middle pair of legs are the running gear. With these in full motion the water strider moves with considerable speed.

With the aid of a magnifying glass we can see the underpart of the body is covered with fine hairs. These keep the body from getting wet. If we have a sufficiently strong glass and a brightly colored specimen we may make a startling discovery.

We may see dozens of tiny, eight-legged mites crawling around in the hair. These are tiny parasites whose combined numbers give the strider a distinct and unnatural coloration. Probably these mites cause no end of discomfort to the water strider, but apparently there is no easy way the insect can free itself from them.

Carefully we turn our specimen over and drop him or her back into the waters of the home-pond. Immediately he skates away, in a big hurry and in a whirling dance as easily as a crab scurries over a sandy beach, his flying feet barely dimpling the surface of the water.

Ready To Grab

As we watch it and the others skating there, we notice they all hold their forelegs out in front of the body, ready to grasp any luckless bug they may overtake. Some may even leap into the air a few inches to grab a low-flying midge.

Regardless of how long we watch these rapidly moving insects, we remain fascinated by the ease with which they walk on the water, their feet barely dimpling the water film.

Strange indeed is the life-history of this common insect that inhabits freshwater ponds and streams; stranger still is the fact there is a species of water-strider that lives and skates over the surface of warm sea water. Many have been observed, miles from the nearest shore gaily skating over the surface of a warm sea.

Boy Scouts

Gold Hill - Cub Master James Kenney presented advancements to several Scouts during a Cub Scout Pack 43 meeting May 23.

The Bobcat induction ceremony was held for Buddy Post new Cub Scout in Den 3. Tommy Carigan received denner bars; Gary Cole, wolf badge; George Kenney, wolf badge and gold arrow; Kenney Wyatt, assistant denner bar and lion badge; Luther Gann, denner bars and bear badge.

The program was opened by Cub Scouts of Den 3 with the pledge, and the audience singing America.

The following skills presented by the dens were entitled: Marching Song, Den 1; Gardening We Will Go, Den 2; "Fun Songs," Den 3.

Lyle McGrady committee man chairman conducted a brief business session during which time plans for a pet show to take place at next pack meeting were discussed. The next Pack meeting will be held Saturday, June 28, at 7:30 p.m. at the multi-purpose room at Patrick school.

ADVANCED

Robert L. Miller, aviation electronics technician, second class, USN, son of Mrs. Isabelle H. Miller, 2252 Fowler lane, Medford, was advanced to his rate recently while serving with Patrol Squadron 2 at the Whidbey Island Naval Air station, Oak Harbor, Wash.

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