

Common Pond Skater

Gerris lacustris

Insects · Active Mar-Oct



Photo by Prosperosity, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

A slender, dark brown bug with long, widely splayed middle and hind legs and short grasping front legs, living on the surface of still and slow water. Common pond skaters are found on almost every pond, ditch, canal and quiet backwater around Dumfries, often several together, and dimple the surface film beneath each foot without breaking through.

BEHAVIOUR

Dense water-repellent hairs on the legs trap air and let the insect stand on the surface tension. It hunts by detecting the ripples made by insects that have fallen in, rowing rapidly to them and seizing them with the front legs to suck them dry. Adults overwinter away from water in leaf litter and moss, and can fly to colonise new ponds, though many individuals are short-winged.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Water striders (Gerridae)
SIZE	8–10 mm
STATUS	Native; abundant on still water

Photo by Prosperosity, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Natureville