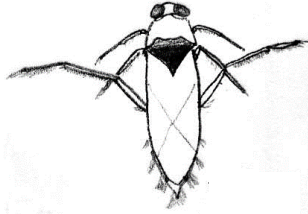


BACKSWIMMER

Water Boatman



Species: Aquatic insect

Scientific name: *Notonecta glauca*

Size:

Up to 15mm (1.5cm)



Key Features:

Backswimmers is light brown, with large reddish eyes. It has powerful oar-like hind legs which it uses to paddle upside-down through the water, often near the surface. Its body resembles that of a boat, hence the name 'water boatman'.

Sometimes they appear silvery in colour under the water because of the air bubble they carry in order to breath under the water.

The backswimmer larvae moult (shed their skin/shell) several times before being fully grown.

Feeding:

Swims upside-down under the pond surface to catch insects that fall into the water. It is also an active predator, hunting small invertebrates, tadpoles and even small fish.

Backswimmers sense vibrations from their prey and stab them with its 'beak', injecting a toxic saliva, then sucking out the body contents!

Amazing facts:

Handle with care – it can give a painful bite!