

# Crane Fly



GARDEN EARTH  
NATURALIST  

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ECO-SERVICE CARDS

# CRANE FLY

FAMILY: Tipulidae

ORDER: Diptera

## IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ 3/8 - 2 1/2 inches with a wingspan to 3 inches
- ◆ long and slender with abdomen longer than head and thorax combined
- ◆ grayish-brown to golden
- ◆ legs thin and usually twice as long as body
- ◆ “smokey” clear wings



### Where to Look:

Wet or muddy areas like around streams, rivers, lakes and ponds.

### Who Eats It?

Skunks and moles feed on the larvae of crane flies. Birds and bats eat the adults.



### LIFE CYCLE

#### COMPLETE METAMORPHOSIS

The adult female crane fly lays her eggs on the moist soil where the larvae feed and pupate. The pupae then overwinter in the mud and the adults emerge in the spring.

### What It Eats

Adult crane flies don't eat. The larvae, however, feed on decaying plants, roots, fungi and the leaves of aquatic plants.



### Did You Know

Swarms of crane flies emerge in the spring and can be seen “dancing” above trees and shrubs waiting to find a mate. The male grabs onto the female and they settle into the leaves of the tree to mate.

### Role in the Ecosystem

Crane flies are part of the food chain and are a food source for many birds and bats.