Horse Fly
HORSE FLY

FAMILY: Tabanidae
ORDER: Diptera (means “two” wings)

IDENTIFICATION CLUES

- relatively large flies, 1/4 - 1 1/8 inch long
- gray, brown, or black; may have iridescent or metallic color patterns
- transparent wings with black or brown patterns
- large eyes, sometimes multi-colored
- females inflict a painful bite

Where to Look:
Common near water where the larvae live. They are often annoying pests around swimming pools and lakes.

Life Cycle
COMPLETE METAMORPHOSIS
Eggs are laid on plants above water. As the eggs hatch, the larvae fall into the water and overwinter in the mud. In spring they form pupae and develop into adults.

What It Eats
and Females suck blood from large mammals. Males eat pollen and nectar. The larvae feed on aquatic insects and earthworms.

Who Eats It?
Horse flies are eaten by birds, frogs and toads.

Did You Know
The saliva of the common American Horsefly contains a chemical that keeps blood from clotting. After a bite, you may bleed for several minutes.

Role in the Ecosystem
Horseflies are an important part of the food chain. They also play a minor role in pollination.