

## Pest Profile



**Photo credit:** Left: Dave - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/76798465@N00/3664500457>  
Right: A. Davey - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/adavey/5040344138>

**Common Name:** Giant water bug (toe biter, electric light bug)

**Scientific Name:** *Lethoceros americanus*

**Order and Family:** Heteroptera (Hemiptera): Belostomatidae

**Size and Appearance:**

	Length (mm)	Appearance
<b>Egg</b>	4 – 5 mm	Rounded grey green, glued to water plants in rows. 100 per clutch.
<b>Larva/Nymph</b>	Nymphs resemble wingless adult. 5 molts to adult.	Translucent green, turning green to brown as it matures.
<b>Adult</b>	60-70 mm	Brown to greenish brown, flattened bodies, winged, leathery appearance. Flies and is attracted to lights. Heart shaped head, bulging eyes. Stout beak and raptorial forelegs. 2 siphon tubes at rear of abdomen.
<b>Pupa (if applicable)</b>		

**Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.):** Piercing-sucking

**Host/s:** An aggressive opportunistic predator hunting anything that gets in fresh water including vertebrates, primarily fish and amphibians. Seizes with forelegs then strikes with beak and injects digestive enzymes into prey.

**Description of Medical Importance (Nymphs and adults):** Giant water bugs aren't known to transmit diseases, but a bite is extremely painful and causes tissue damage similar to a spider bite; can cause rashes and immune responses in sensitive individuals.

## References

Hoffman W. L. (1924). "[Biological Notes on Lethocerus americanus \(Leidy\)](#)". *Psyche*. **31** (5): 176–183.  
[doi:10.1155/1924/86146](#)

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/13708>

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**Giant Water Bug**