

Pest Profile



Photo credit: By Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Common Name: Horse Fly

Scientific Name: *Tabanus spp.*

Order and Family: Diptera: Tabanidae

Size and Appearance: Adult members of the *Tabanus* genus are about 10-30 mm in length, dull brown to black in color with stripes on abdomen, and purple or green colored eyes with stripes present. Adults feature saw-like mouthparts that they use to cut the skin of a target mammal and then feed on the blood produced by inflection. Maggots are smooth, white, 1-30 mm in length, leg and eyeless, and have definite mouthparts. Horse fly maggots are generally carnivorous.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	1.0 mm in length	Oval-shaped white eggs are produced in masses of 100-1000. A jellylike cover is produced which helps mass stay together on rocks, leaves, and other debris covering water.
Larva/Nymph	1-10 mm in length depending on instar	White, cylindrical, definite mouthparts, legless, eyeless, 4-9 instars. Develop usually in wet soil.
Adult	6-12 mm long	Black in color with stripes on abdomen, saw-like mouthparts, colored eyes, often with striping.
Pupa (if applicable)	9-10 mm long	Pupal case is hardened, reddish-brown, and consists of last instar larval skin. Can be terrestrial or aquatic depending on species

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Tearing/lapping

Host /s: *Chrysops spp.* feed on other insect larvae, snails, earthworms, and slugs.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): Horse flies are mostly a nuisance pest as their bite is painful and can make venturing into wooded areas uncomfortable. Horse flies can be an issue with vectoring diseases to livestock such as cows and horses.

References:

Smith, E.H. and Whitman, R.C. (2007). Blood Feeders- Deer and Horse Flies. In *NPMA Field Guide of Structural Pests*. (3.8.1). National Pest Management Association International.

Townsend, L. (January, 2000). Horse Flies and Deer Flies. University of Kentucky, Department of Entomology. Retrieved on July 27th, 2016 from <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef511>