

## The Giant Water Bug (Belostomidae)

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The Giant Water Bug (Fig. 1) is a brownish, aquatic insect that is quite awesome the first time it is encountered. Our common species is about 2 inches long and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide. A strong flier, the bug is commonly found some distance from the fresh water in which it lives. These insects are frequently attracted to lights. Water bugs feed on tadpoles, small fish, and insects by means of a needle-like beak. They may also jab the beak into fingers, etc., resulting in a very painful wound. Otherwise, they should do no damage unless small fish or other preys of the insect are being kept outside.

Some species of giant water bugs share an interesting behavioral trait with the seahorse in that the male nurtures the eggs which are glued to his back where they are carried until they hatch (Fig. 2).

### Selected References:

Borror, Donald J. and Dwight M. DeLong. 1971. *An Introduction to the Study of Insects*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., NY. 811 p.



**Fig. 1. A giant water bug.  
By A.L. Antonelli.**



**Fig. 2. A male giant water  
bug carrying eggs.  
Author unknown.**