

## Ichneumonid Wasps

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The ichneumonid wasps (Fig. 1) comprise one of the largest insect families in the world. This type of wasp, while related to “stinging” wasps, does not possess a stinger. However, females of many ichneumonid species have a rather conspicuous and large ovipositor (egg laying device, Fig. 2) that is commonly mistaken as a stinger. Females have been known to attempt to lay eggs in tissues of those experimenters that work with them, but this is highly unusual behavior. Ichneumonid wasps are generally beneficial as they act as parasites on a variety of other insects, each species being considerably host specific. With the ovipositor, the female injects her eggs into such hosts as bark beetle larvae, flies, and caterpillars. Certain ichneumonids are called hyperparasites because some species lay eggs in other parasites’ puparia. Ichneumonid wasps vary in size and color and generally display long antennae and slender bodies with the abdomen rather elongate, skinny, and depending on the species, laterally flattened or compressed.



**Fig. 1. An ichneumonid wasp that emerged from an obliquebanded leafroller. By K. Grey.**



**Fig. 2. A female ichneumonid wasp. Note the elongate ovipositor. By E. P. Breakey.**