

Meet Natasha, the travelling entomologist! She loves insects, and would like to share her wisdom with you!



Ento-Club is funded by the Royal Entomological Society

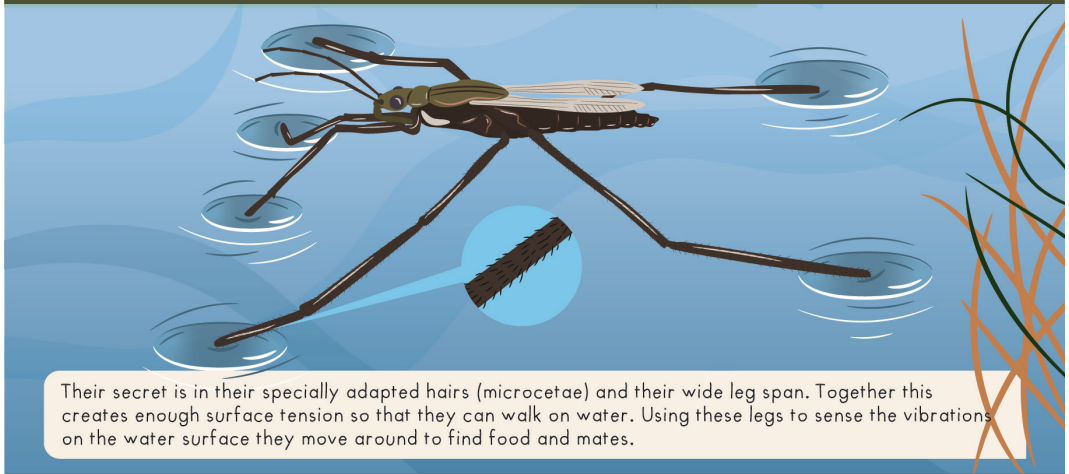
SOMEWHERE IN THE SOMERSET LEVELS...



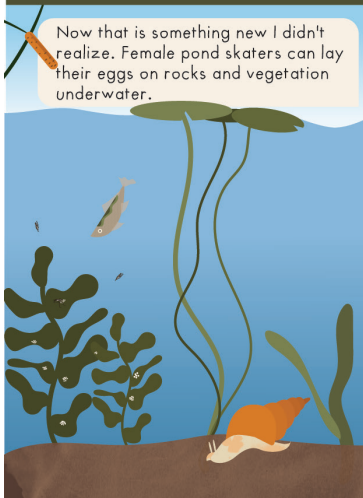
Oh wow! Look at all the pond skaters. It's so amazing how they can walk on water!



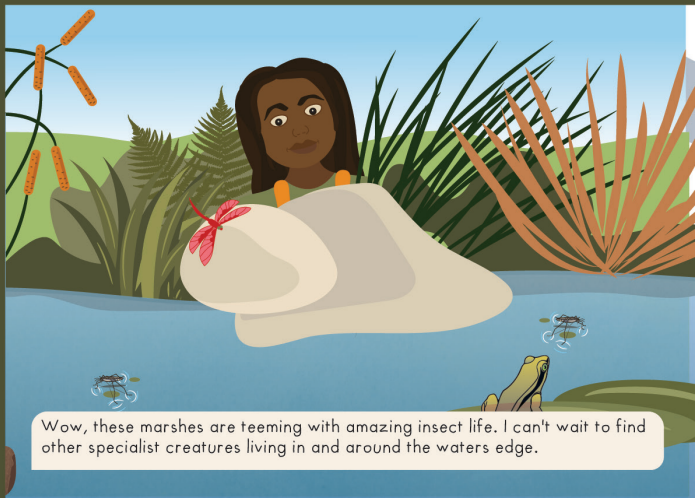
Boy do they move quickly when they're startled. It looks like they're using their middle legs like paddles in a row boat.



Their secret is in their specially adapted hairs (microsetae) and their wide leg span. Together this creates enough surface tension so that they can walk on water. Using these legs to sense the vibrations on the water surface they move around to find food and mates.



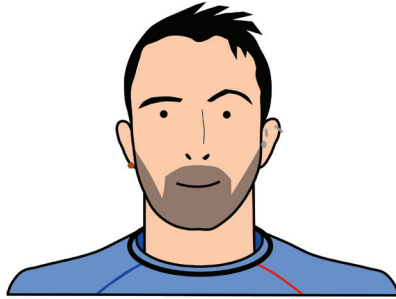
Now that is something new I didn't realize. Female pond skaters can lay their eggs on rocks and vegetation underwater.



Wow, these marshes are teeming with amazing insect life. I can't wait to find other specialist creatures living in and around the waters edge.

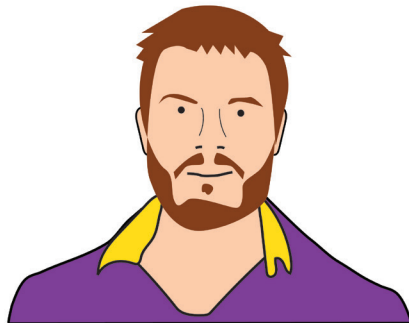
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TOM



I am fascinated by patterns in insect diversity! Most of my research looks at ants. Where I grew up in south Wales, there are only 3 different ant species. In the UK there are over 40! Where I now work, in the Drakensberg Mountains of southern Africa, there are over 90 species in a single valley! My experiments look at how ants cope with different temperatures along mountain ranges so that we can try to understand these big differences in species diversity across the world.

RUDI



The worldwide diversity of insects is astounding and new species are being discovered every year! I am interested in the evolution of new insect species and I use flies to understand the genetic processes that cause one species to split into two. I am also interested in entomophagy, which means studying how people use insects as food. The diversity of insects that are used as food and examining the nutritional quality of different species is a particular focus of my research.