## How the strider walks on water

HEN I was a young man walking along streams and ponds, there were many "water spiders" or so I thought they were. They were really water striders. But since they looked like a spider, and the name sounded like spider, I thought that's what they were. Actually, I saw their shadows on the bottom of the stream first, and then I looked to see what was causing such a shadow.

THIS ACUTE sensitivity to water vibrations is also used in attracting a

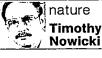
WATER STRIDERS are still common insects along slow moving streams today. Their shadows still attract attention to anyone who takes the time to look. But what causes those shadows?

On the bottom of the middle and rear legs of a water strider are small hairs. These hairs trap air which allows the lightweight insect to remain on the surface of the water.

to remain on the surrace or ine water.

Just as a dry needie can float on
water when the surface tension is
unbroken, so can the furry feet of the
strider keep a strider high and dry.
Where each foot contacts the water, a slight depression is formed.
When sunlight hits this depression it
casts a shadow on the stream bottom.

ALL INSECTS have six legs. But the water strider easts only four leg shadows. The front pair of legs are shortened, often tucked under the head, and are used for manipulating feet.

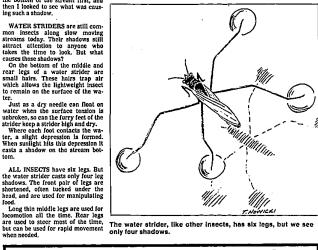


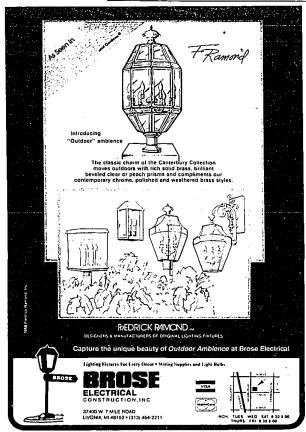
Fine hairs on the feet of striders not only enable them to float on the surface of water, but they also perceive ripples in the water. Small insects eaten by water striders are located by following the waves they produce when on the water. mate.

Males produce vibrations of 10-30 per second with their middle legs to announce their intentions. Receptive females will then Join the male at his

chosen egg laying site.

It is believed that males produce different frequency signals to alert other males to stay away from their territories.









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