

# midge

## representative specimen

### FEATURES

The soft-bodied midges, also known as chironomids, have long wings, antennae and legs, and in general shape resemble a small mosquito. The front pair of legs is the longest. In the male, the antennae are feathery. Midges are usually about one-fourth inch in body length but may be smaller or larger. They do not have ocelli (simple eyes). The larva has a slender, wormlike, segmented body that is about one-half inch long. The gold, brown, green or black larva has a dark head and four tiny legs.

### BEHAVIORS

Midges may be found statewide in Illinois. They live in nearly all habitats and are often seen in swarms. Their life cycle includes egg, larva, pupa and adult stages. The larvae of most species are aquatic. Larval midges live in bottom sediments of lakes, ponds and streams. The female deposits a jellylike mass of eggs on the water's surface or attached to submerged vegetation. The larva eats other larvae, algae, microorganisms and decaying matter. Most adults have reduced mouthparts and do not feed. They reproduce and then die. Midge larvae are an important source of food for fishes.

### TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Arthropoda  
Class: Insecta  
Order: Diptera  
Family: Chironomidae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### ILLINOIS RANGE





adult male



larva

### **Aquatic Habitats**

bottomland forests; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; Lake Michigan; marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams; swamps; temporary water supplies; wet prairies and fens

### **Woodland Habitats**

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

### **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie