

sand wasp *Bicyrtes quadrifasciatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Crabronidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

This sand wasp is about 0.75 to 1.0 inch in length. It has four cream-colored abdominal stripes that become further apart from each other along the midline as they reach the posterior end of the abdomen.

BEHAVIORS

This species nests singly, but there may be many single nests in colonies in sandy areas. It prefers open, sunny areas with sand in which the female digs a tunnel, as much as 12 inches deep, to lay her eggs. The female adult of this species, also known as the stink bug hunter, hunts for nymphs of true bugs, mainly stink bug nymphs, and leaf-footed bugs. The female stings the nymph to paralyze it, and then flies with it to her underground burrow. She stocks her nest with the paralyzed nymphs that will be eaten by her larvae. The adult female feeds on flower nectar. Found statewide, this wasp is only active for about a month. It is a pollinator and is also beneficial for killing nymphs of the invasive brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*). A species of fly acts as a kleptoparasite, at some of the nest sites following the female into the burrow and laying an egg on the paralyzed insect that its larva will eat, effectively starving and thus killing the wasp larva.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge; sand prairie

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2019. Biodiversity of Illinois.