

Insects of *Louisiana*

Michael Hall, Ph.D.

Found in abundance throughout Louisiana, insects occupy all land and aquatic habitats. There are 30 orders of insects, of which 28 occur in Louisiana.

Some orders, such as Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), Coleoptera (beetles), Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies), and Orthoptera (grasshoppers, katydids, and crickets) are quite common and easily observed.

Other orders such as Psocoptera (book lice), Thysanoptera (thrips), and Strepsiptera (webspinners) can be hard to find and observe, either because of their extremely small size or their rarity.



Louisiana Insects Exhibit

Major Habitats of Louisiana Insects

Insects in Literature

Michael Hall, Ph.D. Entomologist

LSU Ag Center retired

Map by David Moore, Forest Botanist

Kisatchie National Forest

Neil Johnson, Photographer Shreveport

Insect Jewelry & Artwork

Victoria Moseley Bayless, Curator

Louisiana State Arthropod Museum Baton Rouge

Amazing Town Ants

JoAnne Percy Barrett &

Stacy R. Blomquist, Entomologists

Erich Vallery, Photographer

John C. Moser, Ph.D., Research

USDA Forest Service, Pineville

Forest Insects

Wood Johnson, Entomologist

USDA Forest Service, Pineville

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Insects of Louisiana

Louisiana State Exhibit Museum

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Shreveport, Louisiana

318.632.2020



Tom Schedler - Secretary of State

MUSEUM HOURS:

Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

FREE Admission • Ample Parking • ADA Accessible

Some Common Orders of Insects Found in Louisiana

Coleoptera: Beetles

There are more species of beetles than any other insect. Coleoptera means sheath wing – the front wings are hard and shield like, the hind wings are membranous and used for flying. Several species of beetles are predators (ladybird beetles, tiger beetles, checkered beetles), while others are quite destructive (boll weevil, wood borers, bark beetles).



R. Berg

Lepidoptera: Butterflies, Moths, and Skippers

Lepidoptera means scale wing – the scales (like fish scales) on the wings and body that give these insects their color and pattern. Adults have a modified sucking mouth part used for feeding on nectar, while caterpillars, which are plant feeders, have chewing mouthparts. The caterpillars of some species can be very destructive.



Lynette Schimming



Insects of Louisiana

Diptera: Flies, Mosquitoes, and Gnats

Diptera means two wings – these insects have only one pair of wings. Many species of flies are beneficial as predators and parasites of other insects, while some, such as the Southern House Mosquito, are important vectors of diseases such as West Nile Virus.



Tom Murray

Odonata: Dragonflies and Damselflies

Both the immature and adult stages of these insects are predators. The nymphs live in water and feed on aquatic organisms; while the adults are voracious feeders on small flying insects, especially mosquitoes. Dragonflies are sometimes referred to as mosquito hawks. Observe the large eyes of these predators.



Chuck Murphy

Blattodea: Roaches

In their natural habitat roaches can be beneficial in that they act as decomposers – helping to break down dead plant and animal matter. Of course at the family home, they are a serious pest. They don't transmit any diseases, but they can contaminate food with their droppings, they stink, and they are just plain annoying. Roaches are nocturnal and well adapted to running and hiding.



Charley Eisman

Isoptera: Termites

Isoptera refers to the wings of the termite being of equal length, unlike that of ants in which the front wings are longer than the back. Termites are social insects, constructing large nests housing a colony containing workers, soldiers, and the queen. Like roaches, termites are beneficial in their natural habitat – they help in the decomposition of dead and dying trees; however, they are extremely destructive to wooden structures such as fences, decks, and homes.



Robert L. Zimlich

Hymenoptera: Ants, Bees, and Wasps

Hymenoptera (Greek god of marriage Hymen) refers to the union of the front and rear wings by a series of hooks called hamuli. This order is comprised of both social and solitary insects. The role of bees and wasps as pollinators and biological control agents is invaluable. However, some of the insects within this order are serious household (wasps and fire ants) and forest pests (sawflies).



Carol Davis

Orthoptera: Grasshoppers, Katydid, and Crickets

These insects are easily recognized by their large hind legs which are used for jumping. These insects have chewing mouthparts and all are plant feeders. Grasshoppers can cause significant damage to many types of plants and crops.



Justin Cret

Mantodea: Mantids

These insects get their common name (praying mantises) from the way they hold their large forelegs in a position that looks like the insect is praying. They are predators on other insects.



Marvin Smith

Hemiptera: True Bugs, Cicadas, Aphids, Leafhoppers, and Plant Hoppers.

This is a very diverse order of insects. Within this order are both terrestrial and aquatic insects. These insects have piercing-sucking mouthparts and feed on plant sap and blood (bedbugs). Many of these insects are serious pests of agricultural crops, while others are predatory on other insects.



Cheryl Moorehead

Ephemeroptera: Mayflies

The name Ephemeroptera comes from the word ephemeral meaning short-lived. Found near streams and lakes, adult mayflies seldom live for more than 1 to 2 days; while the nymphs, who are aquatic, may take 1 to 2 years to complete their development before emerging as adults in massive swarms.



Ashley Bradford

Other Orders Found in Louisiana

- Archaeognatha: Jumping Bristletails
- Zoraptera: Zorapterans
- Plecoptera: Stoneflies
- Embioptera: Web-Spinners
- Psocoptera: Booklice
- Megaloptera: Alderflies, Fishflies, and Dobsonflies
- Raphidioptera: Snakeflies
- Neuroptera: Lacewings
- Strepsiptera: Twisted-Wing Parasites
- Mecoptera: Scorpionflies
- Trichoptera: Caddisflies
- Siphonaptera: Fleas
- Phthiraptera: Lice
- Thysanoptera: Thrips
- Thysanura: Silverfish
- Dermaptera: Earwigs

