

The Robber Flies

Order Diptera

Family Asilidae



Did you know? The Robber flies, Asilidae, is an incredibly large family of over 7,000 species in over 500 genera, with over 1,000 in North America alone!

Did you know? Robber flies are active hunters, generally waiting for insects to fly by before snatching them mid-flight out of the air! This has also earned the name **Assassin flies!**

Did you know? Instead of eating their prey with chewing mandibles like dragonflies, robber flies use a hypopharynx (hi-po-fair-eenx) a specialized spear like mouthpart to slurp up their prey like spiders!

Looks like a bumblebee, right? Wrong! Some Robber fly species, like this *Laphira grossa*, mimic bees to trick predators into thinking they can sting, a trick called Batesian Mimicry.



A Robber fly perching on vegetation waiting for prey to pass by. Robber flies use their enormous eyes to spot prey and prefer bright warm conditions to easily spot insects. (Arrow pointing to hypopharynx).



Credits

Photos: Bruce Marlin, "North American Insects and Spiders",
(https://www.cirrusimage.com/flies_robber/)

Information: Fritz Geller-Grim et al. "Robber Flies (Asilidae)"
(<https://www.geller-grimm.de/asilidae.htm>)

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