

COMMON CRANEFLY

Diptera: Tipulidae

Tipula sp.

Bug
of the
Month



This chunky aquatic insect is the larval stage of a large slender fly commonly mistaken for an oversized mosquito, have any guesses? If you guessed an adult crane fly, you are correct! The larva pictured is a crane fly in the genus *Tipula* (Family Tipulidae). *Tipula* species are commonly known as the “large crane fly” due to its large larval size in comparison to other aquatic fly larvae. The body of this crane fly species is large,

but its head is small and retracted into its body, making it hard to see. To orient yourself when identifying, the smooth end is where its head is and its posterior “back end” resembles tentacles, which are its anal gills. Species within Tipulidae are classified as shredders/collectors that feed on plant tissue and organic matter. Without legs, larval *Tipula* move around by drifting downstream with the current or burrowing

through detritus.

Tipula adults emerge from May until October, making them common this time of year. Once emerged as adults, *Tipula* are large flies that fly slowly and are easily noticeable. Unlike mosquitoes, adult *Tipula* do not feed, so they have no interest in using you as a late night snack!

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