

Robber flies are the Gems of Macro Photographer

Asilidae (Joern and Rudd 1982, Shurovnekov 1962) are the robber fly family, also called assassin flies. Asilidae are a family of true flies belonging to the super family Asiloidea within the suborder Brachycera. To date, there are approximately 7000 described species of Asilidae distributed worldwide.

Scientific name: Asilidae

Family: Asilidae

Order: Diptera

Phylum: Arthropoda

Suborder: Brachycera



Adult robber flies are aggressive, generalist hunters. They have been recorded as bristly predatory flies that generally chase and catch other insects in mid-air. They attack, butterflies, wasps, bees, dragonflies, grasshoppers, beetles, and other flies. Certain

species frequently capture hornets or paper wasps, which are aggressive fighters themselves.



Asilidae are very sharp predator of the small wood that generally chase and catch other insects in mid-air. Most species sit in wait and dart out when likely prey appears. The prey is then sucked dry with the stout proboscis, (enclosing the sharp, sucking hypopharynx) which projects horizontally or obliquely forward. When robbers impale prey, they inject digestive enzymes. The enzymes quickly subdue and soon kill the prey. The digestive enzymes turn the prey's internal tissues to soup, but do not damage the tough chitinous exoskeleton, which now serves as a watertight container full of thick broth. Fluids are sucked through the beak until the carcass until is a dry husk. There is a deep groove between the eyes in both sexes, the eyes never touching even in males. A 'beard' on the face protects eyes from struggling prey. Legs are sturdy and have 2 pads at most. Wings folded flat over body at rest.

Female Asilidae deposit whitish-colored eggs on low-lying plants and grasses, or in crevices within soil, bark, or wood.

Larvae eat some dead vegetable matter, but most are at least partly predatory and some. Larva of robber fly rarely seen because of their location in the soil or rotting wood. They tend to pupate near the soil surface so they can emerge more easily from their pupa cases.



Cannibalism behavior also finds in the robber fly families. Females of some robber fly species are cannibalistic. In the majority of cases female robber fly kills and eats a male before or during copulation.



Robber flies display beautiful courtship behavior. Instead, the male pounces on the female much like an act of prey acquisition. Courtship rituals are

done in the process of tail-to-tail way with the male and female genitalia interlocked. Flight is not completely reserved during mating.



The robber fly has incredibly big sophisticated compound eyes structure, which always the center of attention to the macro photographer and also the eating habit

of robber fly given valuable time to photographer to get extremely sharp & closer picture of the object. Courtship rituals of the robber flies also very attractive to capture through lens.

Arunava Dev





For capturing different moments of Asilidae I used my Nikon D7500/D5300 camera with manual settings with 70-300mm Nikon lens and macro filter with Manual Flash & Homemade Flash Diffuser.

Amazing predatory skills of Robber flies make me always surprised, that's why I call them "Wolf of the insect World"



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