

beewolf

Philanthus gibbosus

FEATURES

Philanthus gibbosus is one of seven species within the *Philanus* genus in North America. They are one of the most widely distributed North American wasps. Many features are common to all *Philanthus*, but they are one-half to three-quarters of an inch long, have small brown wings, are black and yellow in color with small indentations on the abdomen and thorax, and have a small yellow “collar” at the top of the thorax near the head. Females are larger, paler, and have more complex coloration than males.

BEHAVIORS

Beewolves create nests in sandy soils, found on dirt roads, paths, and gravel pits. They are most active in the hottest part of summer and can be seen statewide. Male behavior has not been studied as much as female. Larvae overwinter and pupate in the spring, early summer. Males emerge before females (Protandry), and live up to 49 days, while females live slightly shorter lives. Males and females build individual nests before mating, which protect them from parasites and predators. While adults are pollinators, larval beewolves are carnivorous. Adult females will stalk and sting other pollinating bees, immobilizing them. Victims are carried back to the nest and within a cell of the underground nest, the female will lay an egg next to the alive, but immobile prey, and seal the nest. The egg hatches in two days and the larval beewolf feeds. A nest may be re-occupied several times after initial creation.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Insecta
Order: Hymenoptera
Family: Crabronidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie