



## Class Insecta, Insects

### Order Coleoptera, Beetles

Coleoptera means “sheathed wings.” All beetles have hard forewings, called elytra, which do not help in flying but cover the membranous hind wings and protect the abdomen. Beetles are the largest group of insects, making up approximately 40% of all known insect species. Their habit, diet, and range are quite variable. About 40 families contain predaceous species. All beetles have chewing mouthparts.

## Tiger beetles

Family Cicindelidae

**Description and life history:** Adult tiger beetles are stalking predators (thus the name tiger beetle), running fast on long legs to catch their prey or escape disturbance. They are often a bright metallic color and have protruding mandibles, bulging eyes, and a head that is wider than the prothorax.

**Prey species:** Cicindelids are generalist predators. Many are found in open sandy, sunny locations where larvae dig vertical tunnels into the sand and snatch prey that passes by and where adults can stalk their prey.



Tiger beetle adult. (307)  
Photo: John Davidson