

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*



Tarantula Hawk – Tracy Neal (Photo Contest)

Most species of Tarantula hawks are around 2 inches long, making it the largest type of wasp. They usually have a blue-black body and reddish-orange wings, but some have black wings. The color on their wings tells predators that they are dangerous. They have long legs which have hooked claws that are used for grabbing their prey. The stinger of a female Tarantula hawk can be as long as 7 mm; the Tarantula hawk's sting is the most painful insect sting in the world (found in India, southeast Asia, Africa, Australia, and America).

When a female Tarantula hawk finds a tarantula, it stings and paralyzes the tarantula. Then the wasp drags the tarantula to her burrow or nest, where she lays a single egg on the tarantula's abdomen. Once the egg hatches, the larva makes a hole in the tarantula's abdomen. It then crawls into the tarantula and feeds on the insides. The male, unlike the female, feeds on the nectar of flowers (milkweeds, western soapberry trees, and mesquite trees).

For more information on the Tarantula Hawk, please visit:  
<http://www.desertusa.com/insects/tarantula-hawks.html>