Hairy Water Walkers

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Hairy water walkers described in ABC News in Science and Proceedings of the Royal Society doi: 10.1098/rspa.2013.0832, 5 March 2014. Water striders are small insects well known for their ability to walk on water, but just how they do it is fascinating. It turns out they have water repellent feet which are covered with tiny hairs, named setae. A group of Chinese scientists studied how this hairy surface floats on water and found the water repellent property depends on the size, spacing and orientation of the hairs at the micro-scale level. They found there is an optimal arrangement or hairs that enable a hairy surface to both prevent water from clinging to the surface and to resist the pull of gravity. They also studied the hairs on water strider feet and flies' wings, and wrote: "Our analysis makes it clear that the setae on water striders' legs or some insects' wings are in such an optimized geometry". The ABC article summarized the scientists' findings as: "The hairy legs of water striders are artfully designed to strike a balance between the water capillary action and gravity".

ABC

Editorial Comment: Note the use of the term optimized geometry, i.e. "it can't get any better than this!" Such optimally functional feet work, not just because of the substance the setae (hairs) are made of, but rather because of the way the setae are organised. Since it is a fact that matter cannot organise itself into an ordered array of hairs, such organisation is provably the result of a mind acting on matter. Therefore, note the science journalists can't avoid recognising the obvious – water strider feet are "artfully designed". If water strider feet came about by chance random processes there was no art or design involved, and there would be no successful hairy water walkers. However, those who recognise the results of design, but fail to give credit to the designer, are being deliberately insulting to the Designer, and will one day be called to account for not giving credit to the Creator, whilst applauding the Japanese who did the research that discovered this. (Ref. insects, arthropods, design)

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