

Common Dragonflies and Damselflies of the Chicago Region

Volunteer Stewardship Network – Chicago Wilderness

Produced by: John & Jane Balaban, Jennie Kluse & Robin Foster, with assistance of Laurel Ross and support from the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation.
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LIBELLULIDAE - Skimmers

Large, showy, frequently seen resting on or flying low over vegetation. Often hunt from a perch like Kingbirds. Also includes our smallest dragonflies (Nannothemis and Perithemis) and the ubiquitous Meadowhawks.



1 Sympetrum rubicundulum ♀/♂
 Ruby Meadowhawk: male and female mating in "wheel" position. 34-38mm

RESOURCES:

Dragonflies of Indiana by J. R. Curry. Indiana Academy of Science. 2001. ISBN: 1-883362-11-3
Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies by Nikula and Sones with D. and L. Stokes. Little, Brown, and Company. 2002. ISBN: 0-316-81679-5
Damselflies of the Northeast by E. Lam. Biodiversity Books. 2004. ISBN: 0-9754015-0-5
Damselflies of the North Woods by B. DuBois. Kollath-Stensaas Pub. 2005. ISBN: 0-9673793-7-7
<http://bugguide.ent.iastate.edu/node/view/191/bgimage>
<http://cirrusimage.com/dragonflies.htm>
<http://wisconsinbutterflies.org/damselflies/>



2 Sympetrum obtrusum ♂
 White-faced Meadowhawk: white face. 32-36mm
 Above species are medium-sized and common. Adult males are usually red; females and immature males are yellow;



3 Sympetrum vicinum ♀
 Yellow-legged Meadowhawk: yellow legs. 30-36mm



4 Sympetrum semicinctum ♂
 Band-winged Meadowhawk: half amber wings. 26-38mm
 both sexes sometimes with black abdominal markings.



5 Nannothemis bella ♂
 Elfin Skimmer: our tiniest dragonfly; female has wasp-like pattern on abdomen. 19-21mm



6 Perithemis tenera ♂
 Eastern Amberwing: male has amber wings. 19-25mm



7 Perithemis tenera ♀
 Eastern Amberwing: female has spotted wings. 19-25mm



8 Celithemis elisa ♂
 Calico Pennant: female has same pattern but golden colors. 28-34mm



9 Celithemis eponina ♂
 Halloween Pennant: sits on tips of vegetation even on the windiest days. 34-39mm



10 Libellula quadrimaculata ♂
 Four-spotted Skimmer: stout body; amber and black wing markings. 42-49mm

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11 Leucorrhinia intacta ♂
 Dot-tailed Whiteface: bright white face; yellow dot on top of male abdomen. 27-36mm



12 Pantala flavescens ♂
 Wandering Glider: never seems to land; flies with Anax swarm; clear wings with orange stigma. 45-51mm



13 Pachydiplax longipennis ♂
 Blue Dasher: forward swept wings; white face; seagreen eyes; yellow and brown striped thorax. 32-45mm



14 Erythemis simplicicollis ♀
 Eastern Pondhawk: female is green with dark markings on abdomen. 39-48mm



15 Erythemis simplicicollis ♂
 Eastern Pondhawk: males turn rich blue with age. 39-48mm



16 Libellula vibrans ♂
 Great Blue Skimmer: long wings with black tips; blue-green eyes; white face. 50-63mm



17 Tramea onusta ♂
 Red-mantled Saddlebags: red wing patches have clear area near body; this clear area is larger than in the similar T. carolina. 43-46mm



18 Tramea lacerata ♀
 Black Saddlebags: large black patches at base of hindwings only. 46-55mm



19 Libellula luctuosa ♂
 Widow Skimmer: black basal patches on all wings; males also have white patch in middle of wings. 36-49mm



20 Plathemis lydia ♂
 Common Whitetail: male/female dimorphism in wing pattern; males have broad black stripes in center of wing. 39-47mm



21 Plathemis lydia ♀
 Common Whitetail: females have three brown spots in each wing; yellow slash markings on abdomen. 39-47mm



22 Libellula pulchella ♂
 Twelve Spotted Skimmer: three black spots in each wing; solid yellow stripe on each side of abdomen. 38-54mm

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AESHNIDAE - Darners

Large bodied, with brilliant blue and green colors, unmarked wings. Strong non-stop flyers, eat on the wing like swallows. ⇒



23 Aeshna canadensis ♂
 Canada Darter: genus generally brown striped with blue on thorax; the many species makes ID difficult. 62-73mm

24 Anax junius ♂
 Common Green Darter: recently emerged male; mature male is bright blue; CBS “eye” on head. 68-80mm

MACROMIIDAE - Cruisers

Large, black and yellow markings, green eyes, long legs, low rapid flight. ↓



25 Macromia illinoensis ♀
 Swift River Cruiser: newly emerged. 65-75mm

26 Epithea cynosura ♂
 Common Baskettail: early flight season; brown with yellow markings; wings clear except for dark patch at base. 38-44mm

27 Epithea princeps ♂
 Prince Baskettail: largest emerald; often misidentified as Libellula pulchella but rarely lands. ©Thomas Murray 59-63mm

CORDULIIDAE - Emeralds

Slender brown dragonflies often with metallic green or bronze sheen. Some species have bright green eyes ←↑ which can be seen in flight.

GOMPHIDAE - Clubtails

Usually perch horizontally. Recognized by widely spaced eyes. Abdomen often inflated at tip. Many very similar species in the family. ↓



28 Dorocordulia libera ♂
 Racket-tailed Emerald: small dark dragonfly with brilliant green eyes; abdomen spoon-shaped. 39-43mm

29 Somatochlora hineana ♂
 Hine's Emerald: the many Striped Emeralds makes species ID difficult; this one is federally endangered. 58-63mm



30 Dromogomphus spinosus ♀
 Black-shouldered Spinyleg: long spines mixed with shorter ones on long hind leg. ©Vincent J Hickey 55-65mm

31 Arigomphus submedianus ♂
 Jade Clubtail: moderately wide reddish-brown abdomen tip; male claspers yellow; green eyes. 51-55mm

32 Stylurus plagiatus ♂
 Russet-tipped Clubtail: reddish-brown club; blue eyes; long slender body. ©Thomas Murray 55-63mm

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33 Larva

Dragonflies spend most of their lives in the water as larvae.



34 Eclose process

The animal emerges from the larval skin after metamorphosis as a soft-skinned “teneral” adult.



35 Exuviae

The larval skin left behind when the new adult flies away.

ZYGOPTERA

Damselflies

Males and females dimorphic. Can often identify females by identifying a nearby male of the same species. There are many damselflies in the region, but these eight images allow ID to family, and perhaps to genus. ⇒



36 Calopteryx maculata ♀/♂

Ebony Jewelwing: large size; broad wings; flutters like a butterfly; no stigma; sits horizontally on leaves. Male and female in “wheel” position. 39-57 mm



37 Archilestes grandis ♂

Great Spreadwing: very large; long stigma; wings held wide, dragonfly-like; hangs vertically on stems. 50-62mm



38 Lestes dryas ♂

Emerald Spreadwing: emerald green; wings held open but swept back; long stigma; hangs vertically on stems. 32-40mm



39 Lestes rectangularis ♂

Slender Spreadwing: male with long abdomen relative to wings; vein pale at wing tip. 37-53mm



40 Argia apicalis ♂

Blue-fronted Dancer: small stigma; wings folded over back but held above the body; lands horizontally; can be found dancing among sunny spots in trails. 33-40mm



41 Enallagma civile ♂

Familiar Bluet: many species, mostly blue-black; wings held down alongside body; “helicopters” up and down along stems. 28-39mm



42 Enallagma cyathigerum ♀/♂

Northern Bluet: male and female mating in “wheel” position. 29-40mm



43 Ischnura verticalis ♂

Eastern Forktail: very small, jewel-like; flies among low vegetation like Bluets. 21-29mm