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

2  Sympetrum obtrusum ♂
White-faced Meadowhawk: white face. 32-36mm

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

4  Sympetrum semicinctum ♂
Band-winged Meadowhawk: half amber wings. 26-38mm

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
Odonata of Northeastern Illinois, USA

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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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. ⇒

MACROMIIDAE - Cruisers
Large, black and yellow markings, green eyes, long legs, low rapid flight. 

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

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

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

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

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. 58-65mm

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. ↓
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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. 50-62 mm

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

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

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. 33-40 mm

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

42 Enallagma cyathigerum ♀♂
Northern Bluet: male and female mating in “wheel” position. 29-40 mm

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