

amber-winged spreadwing

Lestes eurinus

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Insecta
Order: Odonata
Family: Lestidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

Amber-winged spreadwings are the only bulky, large, green, and yellow damselflies with amber-tinted wings in the spreading wing family. The males typically have sky-blue eyes above with a pale blue below. Females have blue eyes above and yellow below. The male and female thorax is metallic green (without stripes) at the front, and yellow with irregular dark stripes along the lower sides and underside. The male thorax becomes white, frosted, or dusty-looking towards the tail end whereas the entire female underside is frosted and dusty.

BEHAVIORS

Males and mating pairs perch on grass stems around knee height near the water or occasionally in shrubs with their long abdomen tilted down, even when vertical. Amber-winged males are active fast fliers over open water and along lakeshores, possibly while seeking females. Mating occurs in the afternoon. Females lay eggs in clusters of six or seven just above the water on bur-reed stems, cattail, rush, sedge, under water-plantain, and on top of water-lily leaves. All in the Spreadwing Family (Lestidae) typically rest with their wings spread open, hence the name. They are known only to close their wings under the following conditions: poor weather, nightfall, under threat of predators, or male harassment of females. They are found in permanent bog lakes to pasture ponds with some vegetation and generally in fishless wetlands. They are barely in Illinois, and generally at the southern tip of the state. They are found more heavily outside of Illinois in the surrounding states of Missouri, Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Iowa.

ILLINOIS RANGE



female

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male

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Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none