

black meadowhawk

Sympetrum danae

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

ILLINOIS STATUS
common, native

FEATURES

Black meadowhawks are small, black or black and yellow, dragonflies living in northern regions. Males are unmistakable by their black coloration. They appear completely dark brown and black which spans their face and appendages. The face is metallic. Females have red-brown eyes over pale green with a tan face. The thorax is brown in front with pale yellow sides and black interconnected striping. The abdomen is tan, and yellow at the base with a black stripe on the sides of segments two through nine or ten, and a black middle stripe on segments eight and nine. Younger individuals have a similar color to females and darken with age while maintaining a showy appearance.

BEHAVIORS

Males scatter across marsh and wetlands, contrasting brilliantly against the green sedges. They are not known to be territorial. Immature individuals and females are often nearby in shrubby, herbaceous vegetation, or sometimes on the ground. Females are often higher up, perched in shrubs. Mating mostly occurs away from the water, lasting 20 minutes. By midday, tandem pairs and lone females appear in the water. Egg laying occurs in pairs or solo over open water, moss, mud, or dropping eggs midair. Pairs dip towards the water three times every two seconds, usually laying eggs at a single site, but sometimes scattering them widely. They like marshes, fens with abundant sedges or other vegetation, and shallow lake borders. They range on the northern edge of Illinois into Wisconsin and Canada and east to Vancouver Island. Their range continues west across southern Canada to Alaska and south to northern California and New Mexico, with one recorded sighting in Arizona.

ILLINOIS RANGE





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Aquatic Habitats

marshes; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none