

blue-fronted dancer

Argia apicalis

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The blue-fronted dancers are an Eastern United States damselfly with, as the name suggests, a blue front. Males have blue eyes in front and brown in back. The top of the head is blue with black at the rear with two small, separate spots behind the eyes. The thorax is blue at the front, pale white or tan, occasionally gray-violet in cooler climates, on the sides with a notable black polygon-shaped spot above each middle leg. The abdomen lacks a pattern and appears black above and tan on the lower sides, with a mostly blue top and black underside for the eighth through tenth segments. Females can have multiple appearances. One is with brown and black eyes, lacking blue entirely, and smaller to nonexistent polygons at the base of each middle leg. Another female appearance has an all-blue thorax, with blue along the sides of the abdomen, becoming duller, and blue-gray after laying eggs. Another female appearance is entirely brown. Some can appear green and change color with age.

BEHAVIORS

They perch on the ground or in low vegetation. Some males are often aggressive towards each other. They appeared early and territorial at one pond but did not retain the same territories from one day to the next. Females arrive midday for peak mating time, which lasts up to 27 minutes, followed by paired exploration flight for up to an hour. Paired egg laying focuses on small floating vegetation areas, typically lasting more than an hour. Nearly 50 percent of females continue laying eggs after the pair splits. Both males and females live up to one month at maturity during which they mate an average of one to one and a half times during the span of one week. They like variety of streams, rivers, occasionally ponds, and larger lakes. They typically like large muddy rivers over small streams. They are found throughout Illinois.

ILLINOIS RANGE



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female



male



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Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none