

Canada darner *Aeshna canadensis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Odonata

Family: Aeshnidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The Canada darner dragonfly is generally blue and brown with the male being more brightly colored than the female. Males have blue stripes on the top and sides of the thorax and a dent in the top of the thorax. The abdomen of the male is brown with blue marks. Females have three color options. Blue females may appear to be males because their coloration is very similar to that of males, although duller. Green females have green markings and usually brown tips on the wings. The most common female forms are those that are intermediate and yellow. Nymphs are long and thin, which helps them to easily move among the aquatic plants in their habitat. Adults are about 2.7 to 2.9 inches long.

BEHAVIORS

This species prefers aquatic areas in forests. The female inserts eggs into aquatic plants at or below the water level. Nymphs may hatch within a few weeks, or hatching may be delayed due to unfavorable environmental conditions. The nymph stage may last from a few months to a few years. Although little is known about the reproductive behavior of this species, most dragonflies have several mates and defend a territory. They do exhibit courtship behaviors. Adults feed during the day. They may forage in groups of their own species or with species of other dragonflies. Feeding may occur far from water but within the forested area. Adults catch insects in flight and may eat their prey in flight. Nymphs eat insects and a variety of other small animals.

Aquatic Habitats: bottomland forests; marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams; swamps; lakes, ponds, reservoirs

Woodland Habitats: bottomland forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats: none

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