

common baskettail

Epitheca cynosura

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The common baskettail is, as its name suggests, the most common of its kind. Their body size and dark coloration, including wing markings, tend to increase in northern ranges. Males have red eyes over grey during immaturity. They eventually turn emerald green or blue. Males and females have dull yellow-orange faces and varying hindwing markings, such as dark triangular patches at the bases of their second pair of wings. Males and females have brown thorax and abdomen with dark markings and yellow spots low on their sides. Females exhibit the same coloration as males. Females have thicker abdomens and shorter tips of the tail.

BEHAVIORS

Males fly and hover one to two feet above the ground over pools, streams, shores of lakes and ponds, patrolling around twelve to thirty feet. Mating occurs in flight. Females often observe an area before laying eggs, flying rapidly and stopping suddenly to inspect sites. They feed on small insects (such as flying fire ants) in mid-air. They can occur alone or in swarms moving rapidly over open areas above head height and up into the trees. They like lakes and ponds with open and wooded shores, as well as pools in slow moving streams. They are found throughout Illinois. They range south to the northern half of Florida, northeast to New England, and west to middle Texas and into Kansas just beyond the shared border with Missouri. There are a few observations in Nebraska.

ILLINOIS RANGE



male



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female

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none