

common green darner *Anax junius*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Odonata

Family: Aeshnidae

ILLINOIS STATUS: common, native

FEATURES

The common green darner is approximately two and one half to three inches long and has a green thorax. The abdomen has a dark mid-dorsal stripe. The male's eyes are dull green on a green face. The space between the eyes (frons) is blue in the upper portion with a circular, dark spot. The first abdominal segment is green followed by segments two through six that are bright blue. The remainder of the abdominal segments are progressively darker. Females have color variations. Most have abdominal segments one and two green with the remainder of the segments brown dorsally and gray-green laterally. Some females are colored very similar to the male. Immature individuals are red-violet on segments three through 10. Wings in immatures are uncolored or orange-tinted. Adults, especially females, show yellow-brown coloration in the wings.

BEHAVIORS

While common green darners can eat at any time of day, they are most active at dawn and dusk. They perch low to the ground and often in nonwoody plants. Over open water, they fly from about two to three feet above the water. The female lays eggs on live or dead plants. This species is migratory as well as a permanent resident and often returns from migration before overwintering dragonfly species, including its own, emerge. For the migratory individuals, they mate, lay eggs, the nymphs develop in the summer and the new adults emerge and fly south in the fall. Adults catch insects in flight. Nymphs eat insects and a variety of other small animals. It is believed that they overwinter in eastern Mexico, Florida and the West Indies, breeding along the migratory route and over the winter. The permanent residents overwinter as nymphs, emerge in spring as adults and breed close to their emergence site.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams; swamps; wet prairies and fens; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; Lake Michigan

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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