

eastern forktail

Ischnura verticalis

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The eastern forktail is a small forktail with a black and green striped thorax and blue abdominal tip. Males have a bright green face, thorax, and eyes with blue spots behind the eyes. They have black middle and side stripes on the green thorax. The abdomen is mostly black, excluding green on the sides of the first and second segments and blue on the eighth and ninth segments. Female eastern forktail can have many appearances. Immature females can have an orange abdominal base, thorax, and spots behind the eyes while mature females might be dusty grey with green eyes and faces. Some females, though rare, might have the same coloration as males though somewhat of a bluer thorax and more black on abdominal segment eight. All female stages have black middle and side stripes on their thorax.

BEHAVIORS

Males and females perch in or cruise through vegetation at the water's edge, hunting for prey and mates. Mating lasts 40 minutes. Females typically mate only once and flutter their wings while curving their abdomens downward to repel other damselflies. Females lay eggs alone, only on floating and emerging stems of plants like grasses, sedges, or on dead leaves. Females are also likely to eat other damselflies. They are found in lakes, marshes, ponds, large river edges, slow streams with quiet waters, and beds of vegetation. They are found throughout Illinois. Their range goes north into Canada, south to the upper third of Georgia, northeast to New England, and west to the western edge of the plains.

ILLINOIS RANGE





female



male

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none