

emerald spreadwing

Lestes dryas

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

Emerald spreadwing is known to be stocky with an emerald-green front thorax, hence the name. None is as brilliant green as this species of spreadwing, though some immature may appear brownish. Male upper thorax and abdomen is characteristically metallic green in the front and dusty white on the sides and underside, especially with increasing maturity. Female thorax metallic green upper, but with yellow underside. Both the male and female thorax present narrow, pale lines down the middle and along the sides of the back (running vertically between the head and the wings). The female has brown or blue eyes at maturity.

BEHAVIORS

Mating males and pairs prefer dry parts of the habitat. They lay eggs in the living stems of sedges, grasses, horsetails, or willow leaves hanging high aboveground. When found near wetlands, they might struggle to reproduce successfully in the presence of aquatic predators (e.g. fish and dragonflies). All in the Spreadwing Family (Lestidae) typically rest with their wings spread open, hence the name. They are known only to close their wings under the following conditions: poor weather, nightfall, under threat of predators, or male harassment of females. They are common in forests and shrublands near ponds for mating or at the edges of permanent wetlands. They are barely found in Illinois and are generally found just inside and along the northern Illinois borders near the surrounding states of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Indiana.

ILLINOIS RANGE



female

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male

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Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none