

little blue dragonlet

Erythrodiplax minuscula

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

ILLINOIS STATUS
common, native

FEATURES

The little blue dragonlet is a small to medium (about one inch long) dragonfly and the only species of *Erythrodiplax* found in Illinois (3 species in North America). Young adult males and females are black and dusky yellow, have large eyes, blue legs, and clear wings. The wings of this species are angled forward towards the head when they perch. Females have a tan face; blue-grey eyes under opaque red; and a stout, yellow abdomen with a white tip and a stripe down the top of it. Males have bright blue eyes under opaque red, and the last few segments of the abdomen are black and end with a white tip. Mature adult males become almost completely light blue with age and are very similar to the eastern pondhawk (*Erythemis simplicicollis*), which occurs statewide, is about half an inch larger, and has a dark green-blue eyes and a green face.

BEHAVIORS

The aquatic larvae are crawlers and do best in clay substrates, in warm water with lots of light. Adult males are very territorial and spend lots of time perched on low-lying aquatic vegetation on the margins of heavily vegetated ponds and lakes. Copulation is brief (in as little as 3 seconds!) and occurs in flight. Females deposit eggs immediately within or near dense vegetation. They can be seen in flight from June to August on the far Eastern side of state, south of I-74 to the confluence of the Ohio and Wabash rivers.

ILLINOIS RANGE



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female



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male



Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none